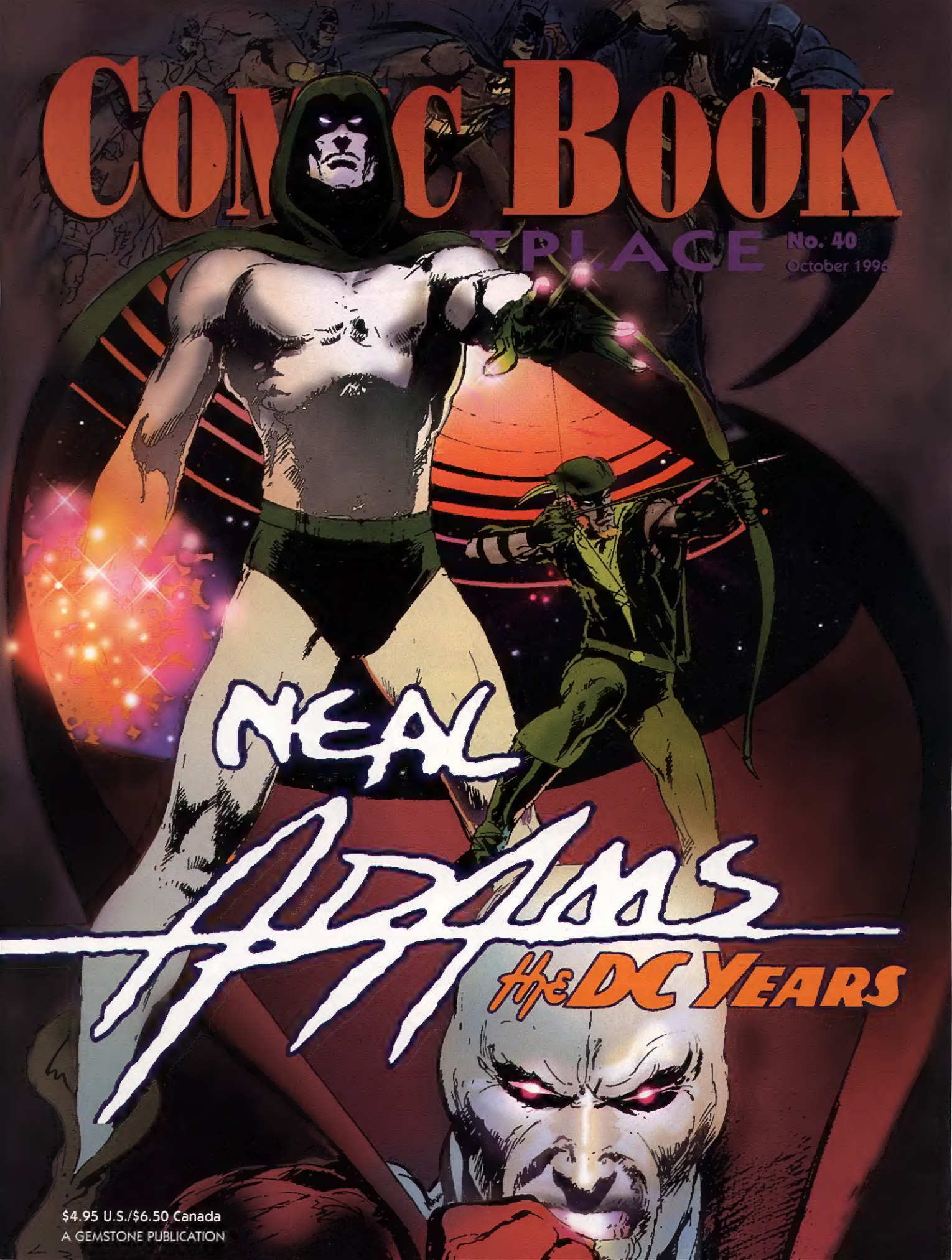
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October 1996
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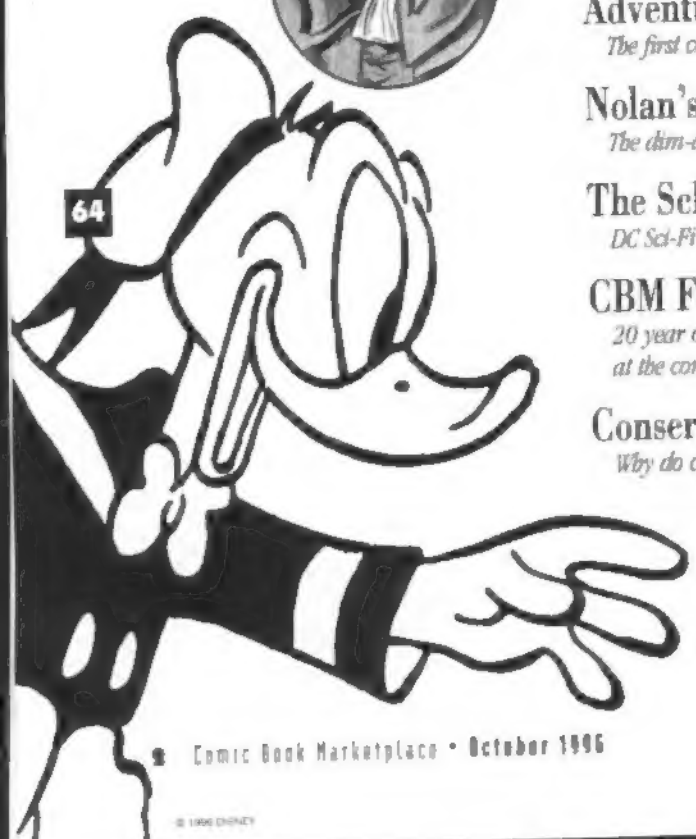

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Volume 2 • Number 40
October 1996
A Gemstone Publication

ON THE COVER
Batman, Deadman, Green Arrow, and Spectre as drawn by the great Neal Adams!
Colored by Bill Sienkiewicz.

Batman, Deadman, Green Arrow, & Spectre © 1996 DC
Art © 1996 Neal Adams

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[redacted] October 1996

CHANGED FOREVER!

With the publication of *CBM* #40, a dream of mine has become reality. Finally the Neal Adams *CBM* special issue is actually in print. Here's how it happened. When I was still at Overstreet Publications some years back, I tried on several occasions to develop an interview with one of my all-time personal favorite artists… the great Neal Adams. My efforts were, alas, in vain. Yet I never gave up hope that some magazine I was associated with would get to present a comprehensive piece on "the man who changed comics forever." I was actually discussing (with *CBM* staff) the possibility of trying again, when literally, out of the blue, a gentlemen by the name of Arlen Schumer rang me up to propose a Neal Adams special issue similar in scope to *CBM* #28 (the Steranko Issue). Stunned and amazed at the serendipitous timing of Arlen's call, we immediately began a still-raging debate about who is Neal's number one fan… he or I!

Turns out that Arlen had the distinct privilege of personally working with Neal Adams, something most artists and fans would give their eye-teeth for! Inquiring more about the mysterious Mr. Schumer, I found out that he sported some mighty impressive credentials. Besides graduating from the Rhode Island School Of Design, Arlen is the author of several ground-breaking articles including "The New Graphics Of Comic Book Art" (for *Print* magazine) and the multi media presentation "Superhero To Antihero: Comic Book Art In The 1960s". He also designed graphics for "The David Letterman show" at NBC.

With wife and partner Sherri Wolfgang, Arlen now runs the graphic design company **Dynamic Duo** with big-name accounts like Coca-Cola, Reebok, and Kellogg's. Besides numerous other projects, Arlen will be teaching the first "Comic Book Art History" course at the School Of Visual Arts! Impressive though these credentials may be, Arlen's most important qualification (to me) is his limitless enthusiasm and love for Neal Adams' work! I have never met anyone quite so committed to "spreading the gospel of Adams".

But Arlen's surprises didn't stop there. He further dazzled me by suggesting that we use an original Adam's line drawing for the cover featuring my absolute favorite Adams characters… Deadman, Green Arrow, Batman, and (gasp) even the Spectre!

And who would color this graphic treasure? None other than industry great Bill Sienkiewicz! As you can see for yourself, Bill's brilliant contribution to this Month's *CBM* cover is a testament to his love of Neal's work as well as his own massive talent. Thanks Bill for an incredible job! This just may be the best *CBM* cover to date.

As I gazed upon this month's cover art, I was immediately swept back through time to the late '60s. I recalled how much Neal Adams' work for DC changed the way my brother and I looked at comics. The conclusion and insights that Lane and I arrived at in 1969 regarding Neal Adam's work… are still how we feel today… and they can be summarized this way. We concluded that, for all time, the work of Neal Adams raised the standards against which comic art is judged … and has changed for the better the comic book industry and our hobby!

So let me add my name to the long list of fans and artists who've expressed their deep appreciation for all you've done over the years. Thanks, Neal, for changing comics… and the way I look at them… forever.

Gary

Gary M. Carter, Editor

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CBM E-Mail

Hey Gary, I just want to let you know that I think your publication does this industry a lot of service. An all around excellent magazine which is very informative. The Gemstone Web site is a very good idea, more exposure. I'll shortly be writing again about this industry and will e-mail it. I just have to put all my thoughts down to paper first.

A loyal Golden Age and CBM fan forever!

Joseph Shafir, Ontario, Canada

Thanks for reminding me Joseph... readers can now e-mail their letters to CBM. Our e-mail address is cbmktpl@ix.netcom.com

1st Lois Lane Cover?

Re: latest Overstreet Price Guide: Action Comics #29 – 1st Lois Lane cover – surely not! I have a copy of Action Comics #27, and the young lady on the cover, that Superman is saving from a lion, must be Lois Lane. Although the scene does not appear within the Superman story for this issue, Lois appears in an identical yellow dress to that displayed on the cover. Furthermore, her general appearance (hair, face, and figure) is almost identical to that of the girl on the cover of Action #29.

There are only three earlier occurrences of girls being saved by Superman on an Action cover: issues #23 and #24 sport brunettes. The girl on the cover of issue #25 appears to have black hair, like Lois, but her general appearance does not match.

Perhaps you could arrange a correction of details for the next price guide, or let me know where my understanding is wrong.

May I also state what a pleasure it is to read your magazine - which is not easy to obtain in England (except through those kind people at Conquistador). Kind regards,

Chris Phillips, Bristol, England

Topped 25

Thanks for everything and keep the good stuff coming. Just so you know, sales on the "Detective Dan" issue (CBM #36) topped 25 in our Westheimer store. Thanks again,

Richard Evans, Bedrock City Comic Company, HoustonTexas

You're one of the good guys Richard... Lisa and I want to thank for your unswerving loyalty and support!

Color Variants

As a collector going on 44 years, I would like to comment on Ron Mason's letter concerning "The Clutching Hand". First, over the years of collecting I've chanced to pick-up duplicates of books as well as collecting new books. In both cases I've noticed color variants on many books and issues. As an artist and being familiar with the printing process over the years, this is what I have observed.

The press run of comic books, single issues, is very high for the mass market. The colors are very rich up to "x" amount of comics and as the last "x" amount finish coming off, the plates pick up the ink which may not be as strong as the first issue print. Thus, the "blues may not be as blue" or reds as red, etc.

Today, one can tell; I know what sun-fade looks like and it is obvious, what issues came off first and last, though one would likely have to find issues from different states to compare. This can be seen on any comics from any decade if one were observant enough.

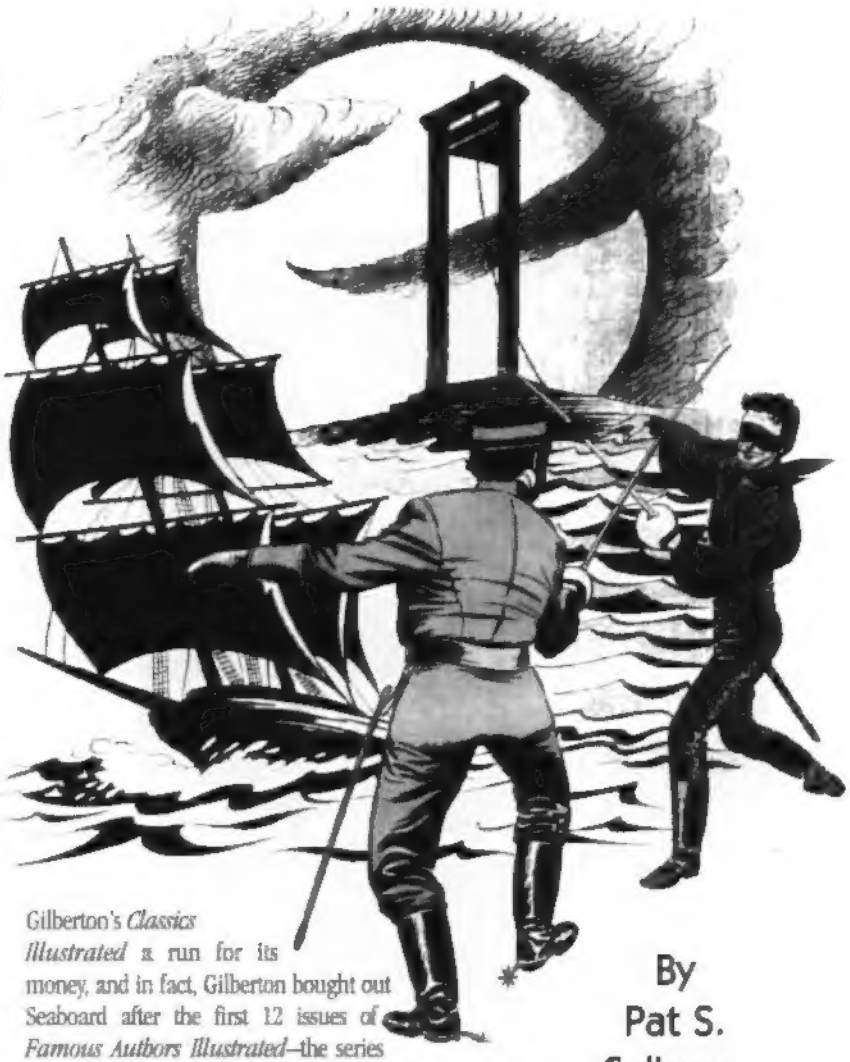
Mike Roberts, Oklahoma

Your explanation perfectly matches what every old-time pressman has told me about variable inking densities throughout the press run. I've owned as many as a dozen issues of the same book... and virtually every copy had slight hue differences! The real questions for collectors are how might it affect condition (and possibly value) and what were the originally intended color values. Food for thought. Thanks Mike, for contributing a clear explanation for CBM readers.

(continued on page 75)

THE FIRST COSTUMED HEROES?

Before the Batman and the Phantom... came the Flower and the Fox!



By Pat S. Calhoun

An important event in the development of the "modern hero"--as exemplified in the pulps and comic books- was the publication of *The Scarlet Pimpernel* in 1905. The novel was first published in England, and was written by a Hungarian emigre, Baroness Orczy. Orczy's character, the Scarlet Pimpernel, named after a little red flower, popularized such devices as the "secret identity" and the hero being a "master of disguise". The Scarlet Pimpernel takes place during the French Revolution, and the title character specializes in rescuing French nobility bound for the guillotine.

Sir Percy Blackeney is a prototype of the "wealthy young socialite" who unknown to others leads a double life as a devoted enemy of injustice. So foppish and shallow is Sir Percy, that his wife, the beautiful Marguerite, has begun to doubt her love. But soon she begins to suspect that her husband might be more than he seems. Orczy extended the characters in a number of sequels in which Sir Percy continued to be "No. 1 most wanted" by the agents of the French revolutionists.

Although the Scarlet Pimpernel never became a continuing comic book character, certainly his influences on the pulps published in the USA in the years before comic books were seminal and manifold. The one comic book that did feature the character, an adaptation of the first novel, was a first-rate piece of work. Published by Seaboard's Fast Fiction in 1949, The Scarlet Pimpernel translates elegantly to the four-color page. The story fills 29 of the book's 32 pages with the "streamlined action" that Seaboard promised and delivered.

Seaboard's *Fast Fiction* series was the first outfit to give Gilberton's *Classics Illustrated* a run for its money, and in fact, Gilberton bought out Seaboard after the first 12 issues of *Famous Authors Illustrated*--the series that succeeded *Fast Fiction*. Seaboard's staff then transformed into the producers of the *Classics Illustrated Junior* series. The Scarlet Pimpernel was adapted by Dick Davis and drawn by Jim Lavery, working in a bold and colorful yet appropriately old-fashioned style.

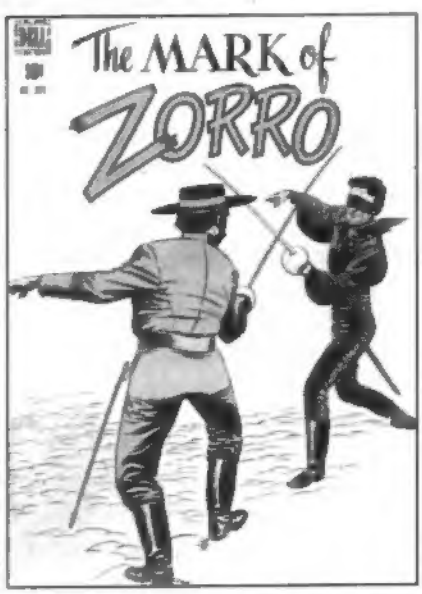
The story begins with Sir Percy disguised as an old crone driving a cart past the French inspectors. She banters with the guards about hurrying back to her "plague-stricken" family, which somewhat understandably compels them to keep their distance rather than search the cart. Of course a couple of aristocrats hidden beneath the dirty blankets in the back are quite thrilled at being spared the ordeal of "shortening".

This latest rescue so enrages Chauvelin, the Chief Inspector, that he turns his hunt for the Pimpernel into a personal vendetta and voyages to England to blackmail Marguerite--not knowing her husband is the man he seeks-since he has her brother in a French prison awaiting execution. Chauvelin has obtained one of the Pimpernel's calling cards emblazoned with the red flower insignia that bears a note saying that the Pimpernel will attend, in disguise, an upcoming social event, and he wants Marguerite to spy for

him, offering to free her brother if she can identify the Pimpernel to him.

Marguerite agrees, and it is soon after this that she first begins to suspect that Sir Percy may be the Scarlet Pimpernel. When her suspicions are confirmed she must risk betraying her husband or losing the chance to save her brother. Since Chauvelin has told her that he knows where the next rescue rendezvous will be, she makes haste there, hoping to warn Sir Percy. It all comes down to a well-crafted face-off between hero and villain that caps a splendidly exciting "graphic novel".

FAMOUS AUTHORS ILLUSTRATED #1 (May 1950) repackaged Fast Fiction #1 with a new front cover by H. C. Kiefer. The back cover shows the guillotine, a ship bound for the safety of England, and the little red flower that gave the hero his name.



SWORDS CROSS IN OLD CALIFORNIA as Zorro clashes with the local authorities after they have hassled his fiancee's family, on a wraparound cover by Bill Ely. This issue is the first appearance of the character in comic book form. (Four Color #928, May 1949)

Many of these elements were incorporated into Johnston McCulley's 1919 pulp adventure, "The Curse of Capistrano", which introduced his legendary character, Zorro! A historical setting, the dual identity of a frivolous playboy, political intrigue—McCulley added a costume to these, bringing the hero concept one step closer to the likes of the Phantom and Batman. Zorro, "the Fox", master swordsman, confounded the corrupt authorities of Old California again and again in McCulley's pulp novels. The character also gained fame as a screen star when Douglas Fairbanks portrayed him in "The Mark of Zorro", a 1920 film from one of McCulley's books that established Fairbanks as a swashbuckling star.

"The Mark of Zorro" was filmed again in 1940, with Tyrone Power playing the masked avenger, and when this film was re-released in 1949 Dell produced the first comic book adaptation of Zorro. It is a good example of Dell's superb packaging. A wraparound front cover, cameo portraits of the characters on the inside covers, and a 32-page uninterrupted cover-to-cover classic inside- The Mark of Zorro (*Four Color* #228) is an exemplary use of the comic book format. Bill Ely illustrated inside and out in a workmanlike style that's unobtrusive and concentrates on capturing the flow of the narrative.

The story starts at the house of Lolita Pulido, the fiancee of Zorro's alter-ego, Don Diego Vega, where Zorro humiliates the local authorities, carving his "Z" on the forehead of the Captain. Complications ensue when Captain Ramon begins courting Lolita. After a second encounter, where Lolita spurns the Captain's rude advances, and Zorro shows up to protect her and again humilates Ramon, the Captain plots vengeance and turns the Pulido family in as conspirators against the government, accusing them of assisting Zorro.

Zorro organizes some of the local nobles, and they storm the jail and free the Pulidos, forcing Ramon to redouble his efforts to capture the Fox and punish all who aid him. And if the duel between Ramon and Zorro at the end isn't quite the equal of the marvelous swordfight between Tyrone Power and Basil Rathbone in the film, it still provides a satisfying finish to the adaptation.

Several Dell Zorro sequels followed this first issue, and probably influenced Disney in their decision to base a TV series on the character, which in turn served as the basis for Dell adaptations of Disney's version.

The political motivation of these two historical heroes would soon give way to the "crime fighters"—which is in itself a telling commentary upon the changing climate of the century. In the early 1930s the pulps produced the Shadow and the Spider, who embodied this change, and they often fought "super villains", a concept that also became part of the heroic formula that found four-color fulfillment in the great costumed characters of comic strips and books. ■

These days many hobbyists are turning their attention to the numerous and often short-lived titles from the 1950s. Among the most popular are the politically incorrect issues that portray attractive woman with room temperature IQs!

BY MICHELLE NOLAN

THE DIM-DAME SWEEPSTAKES!

AND OTHER SHORT-AND-SWEET RUNS

IN THE LONG RUN, SOME COMIC BOOK COLLECTORS MIGHT find more than a brief diversion and may get the most fun in collecting a few of the hundreds of short-lived series produced during the 1940s and '50s. This was brought home to me again and again at the San Diego comic convention last July, when more than one collector expressed his or her frustration about how difficult it has become to collect long runs (whether they are expensive or not). My suggestion: Why not zero in on a few of those many old "runs" of 2 to 12 issues?

It may seem much more satisfying to complete a run of 50 or 100 issues or more. But it can be just as much fun to search out and complete a short run, especially since some of them are much more challenging to complete. If you doubt me, think about it this way: What would take you longer, finding all three issues of *Slick Chick Comics* from 1947 or locating all 120 1950's issues of *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories*? I doubt if all three *Slick Chick* issues were available in San Diego– I'm still looking for #2 and I didn't find it there!– but I'll bet I could have put together a run of those Disney delights in fairly short time (albeit for a lot more money).

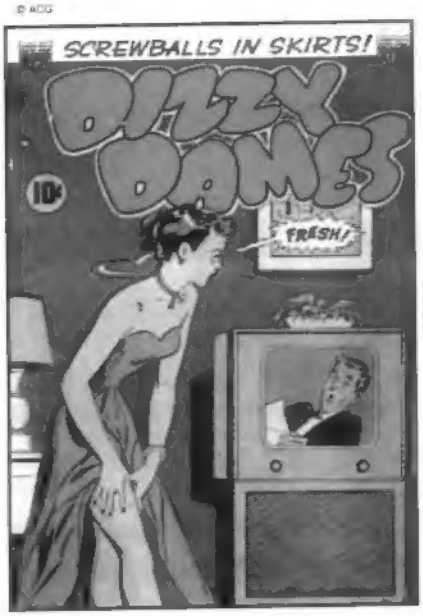
Many of the short-run comics involve humorous subjects. This means that they're generally much cheaper than short runs of such early super hero titles like *Great Comics* and *Bang-Up Comics*, which ran three issues apiece in late 1941 and early 1942. The short-lived humor comics also can be much harder to find, since the price increases of recent years on titles such as *Great* have brought a lot of them to light. Dealers don't really have a whole lot of incentive to offer the five issues of *Oh, Brother!*– which might set you back $25 if you could find the entire lot in one place – which isn't likely. But with even the most obscure early super hero comics selling for well over $100 each in grade– and you can't get much more obscure than *Bang-Up Comics* and its heroine, the wonderfully named Lady Fairplay! (Dealers… grab as many of those little-known super hero titles as they can and bring them to conventions!)

I received considerable pleasant feedback on my article on teen humor comics (*CBM* #34, April 1996), so this is a bit of a follow-up on that article, which dealt primarily with the best known teen humor comics from the best known companies. I had no idea there were so many collectors out there who enjoy stories about kids who are, well, "out there".

There seems to be a surge of interest in what might best be called "Dim Dame" comics– sort of the politically incorrect corollary to "Good Girl" art, and an interesting sub-genre all its own. I would hope this involves more than a generally curious fascination with these esoteric cultural artifacts of the 1950's than with any backlash about intelligent women. At least the collectors of "Dim Dame" comics apparently don't seem to promote the "glories" of comics featuring the physical abuse and torture of women the way so many seem to do nowadays, especially in the current comics arena.

Be that as it may, there are some gentle laughs to be had from the likes of Atlas's *My Girl Pearl* and ACG's *Dizzy Dames* featuring the Milt Gross creation, Moronica.

My Girl Pearl ran four issues in 1955, two more in 1957, and a final five in 1960-61, with the last being #11 (April 1961). It was, by the way, this kind of comic that Stan Lee jettisoned to make room on Marvel's limited publishing schedule for the likes of *Fantastic Four* #1. By reading these comics, you learn fascinating little tid-bits like the fact that Pearl had a boyfriend named Flash, a name that Lee soon used to so much better advantage in the Spider-Man saga.



SCREWBALLS IN SKIRTS is how ACG labeled the politically incorrect title *Dizzy Dames*. #3 (Jan/Feb 1953) has an early TV cover.

My Girl Pearl was sub-titled "America's Darling Dim-Wit" when it first appeared in 1955… and "The Teen-Age Doll!!" when it last appeared six years later. There's a message there, folks, although the Lee-signed stories still cracked outrageous jokes in the last issue. For example, when Pearl answers her door, she is greeted with "Hello, Lady! I'm a door-to-door salesman," she responds by saying, "I'm sorry! I don't need any doors!" You have to admit, that is pretty original! (Or maybe Lee was just recycling old Jack Benny jokes.)

My Girl Pearl was actually one of the oddest hybrid comics imaginable, featuring Betty & Veronica style art by Dan De Carlo in the early issues. There were pin-up pages and costumes in the stories, supposedly designed by credited readers, apparently as a response to Archie's wildly popular *Katy Keene* series of the time, but Katy was always sharp and smart in more ways than one. One wonders, however, how Pearl's readers had time to send in costume designs for a new comic, but the answer seems lost in the mists of time.

Lee didn't waste a panel, and the result was some pretty fun stuff: "Mr. Dunkle, may I introduce my clerk, Pearl Dimly," her boss opens a story. "You don't have to introduce me, Mr. Wortle...I already know myself!" Pearl replies. "Pearl! Pay Attention!" he says in the next panel. "I can't! I'm broke!" she responds. "Look, numskull! Mr. Dunkle is an interior decorator whom I've engaged!," he says. "But you're already married!" Pearl responds. "I'm not engaged to marry him! Two men can't get married!" he shouts. "Oh, yes they can!" Pearl retorts. "They can? How?" Mr. Dunkle asks. "To two women!" Pearl replies. And that's how the entire comic goes!

By the way, the second issue ends with these lines: "Y'know, Pearl... you're a lot smarter when you don't say anything!" "Who isn't?" "She's got something there!" Indeed! If you think this stuff isn't inspired lunacy, try sitting down and writing a few of these kinds of jokes yourself. It's a lot tougher than it seems, but Stan Lee pulls it off pretty well. But if this doesn't make you want to go out and collect *My Girl Pearl*, let's check out something else from the old Atlas-Marvel short file.

Meet Miss Bliss by Stan Lee and the humor artist ubiquitous Al Hartley ran four issues in 1955, detailing the humorous and romantic adventures of junior high school teacher Betty Bliss (now, is that subtle or what!) and the other faculty members, told from her point of view. What makes this comic unusual is the emphasis on junior high, which, as any teacher can tell you, is the toughest place of all to teach. Miss Bliss's interactions with the students and

Short Stuff

Fifty interesting short-run humor titles

Aggie Mack #1-8 (Superior, 1948-49)
Babe, Darling of the Hills #1-11 (Prize, 1948-50)
Broadway Hollywood Blackouts #1-3 (Stanhall, 1954)
Canteen Kate #1-3 (St. John, 1952)
Cutie Pie #1-5 (Lev Gleason, 1955-56)
Della Vision #1-3 (Atlas, 1955)
Dizzy Dames #1-6 (ACG, 1952-53)
Double Trouble #1-2 (St. John, 1957-58)
Everything Happens to Harvey #1-7 (DC, 1953-54)
Farmer's Daughter #1-4 (Stanhall, 1954)
Flat Top #1-7 (Magazine Publishers/Harvey, 1953-55)
GI Jane #1-11 (Stanhall, 1953-55)
Ginger #1-10 (Archie, 1951-54)
Going Steady with Betty #1-2 (Betty & Her Steady #2, Avon, 1949-50)
Hi-Jinx #1-7 (ACG, 1947-48)
Jetta of the 21st Century #5-7 (Standard, 1952-53)
Joe College #1-2 (Hillman, 1949-50)
Junie Prom #1-7 (Deerfield, 1947-49)
Junior #9-16 (Fox, 1947-48)
Junior Hopp #1-3 (Stanmor, 1952)
Leroy #1-6 (Standard, 1949-50)
Linda #1-4 (Ajax, 1954)
Little Angel #5-16 (Standard, 1954-59)
Little Archie in Animal Land #1, 17-19 (Archie, 1957-58)
Lil' Jinx #11 (#1 on cover) #16 (Archie, 1956-57)
Lucy the Real Gone Gal #1-4 (St. John, 1953)
Mazie #1-12 (Magazine Publishers issues, 1952-54)
Meet Corliss Archer #1-3 (Fox, 1948)
Meet Merton #1-4 (Toby, 1953-53)
Meet Miss Bliss #1-4 (Atlas, 1955)
Meet Miss Pepper #5-6 (St. John, 1954)
Miss Beverly Hills #1-9 (DC, 1949-50)
Miss Melody Lane #1-3 (DC, 1950)
Mortie #1-4 (Magazine Publishers, 1952-53)
My Date #1-4 (Hillman, 1947-48)
My Girl Pearl #1-11 (Atlas, 1955-61, interrupted twice)
Oh, Brother! #1-5 (Stanhall, 1953)
Ozzie & Harriet #1-5 (DC, 1949-50)
Patty Powers #4-7 (Atlas, 1955-56)
Penny #1-6 (Avon, 1947-49)
Sherry the Showgirl 1-3, 5-7 (Atlas '56-57)
Showgirls #4,1-2 (Atlas, 1957)
Slick Chick Comics #1-3 (Leader Enterprises, 1947)
Starlet O'Hara #1-4 (Standard, 1948-49)
Stevie #1-6 (Mag Publ., 1952-54)
Sunny #11-14 (Fox, 1947-48)
Teena #20-22 (Standard, 1949-50)
Teena #11,12,15 (ME's A-I series, 1948)
Tuffy #5-9 (Standard, 1949-50)
Vicky #1 (nn)- #5 (Ace, 1949-50)

faculty are genuinely funny, making for a genuinely collectible comic. By the way, in my copy of #4 (November 1955, the only one I've ever seen) the blonde Miss Bliss has been colored in as a redhead, doubtless by some youngster who wanted to see what she'd look like 15 or so years down the road! Alas, Miss Bliss lasted only four issues, to be converted into the straight romance comic *Stories of Romance* with #5, more's the pity. *Meet Miss Bliss* is a very tough run to collect… and if you don't believe this, see how long it takes you to find all four issues! But then, that's the fun of this stuff. The more obscure it is, the more fun it can be to collect.

Actually, *Meet Miss Bliss* followed by one year the two-issue series *Meet Miss Pepper* (#5 and 6) done for St. John in 1954. Done by Norman Maurer and Joe Kubert, this series details the misadventures of a teacher at Pine Hill High School. The stories aren't particularly funny, but Kubert's comedic art is a manic gem!

It's also fascinating that on the last page of #6 (June 1954), Kubert and Maurer have an ad for a "comic book illustrators instruction course", asking readers to send in $1 for the first lesson. Do any of these lessons still exist today? I've never seen one even advertised! The ad says "Draw for Comic Books" "Learn and earn in you spare time...at home!" and begins with the blurb "Hundreds of new comic books on sale have created a terrific demand for artists!" Well... six months or so later the comic book industry suffered a severe crunch in the wake of the establishment of the Comics Code, and getting a job in comics became almost impossible!

One wonders if Kubert and Maurer ever sent out any of those instruction courses, which would be invaluable collectors' items today. Kubert did, of course, later establish his school, but he was younger than 30 when he made this first attempt at instruction! He draws himself in a blurb and (slightly exaggerating) says that "Norman and I will give you hundreds of important professional tips... things that we've learned during the 30 years we've been in the comic book business!" In 1954, the entire "comic book business" was 20 years old! (Maybe they were referring to their combined experience.)

Another entry in the "Dim Dame" sweepstakes was the comic that preceded *Meet Miss Pepper* at St. John-- *Lucy The Real Gone Gal* #1-4 in 1953-54. This is another one of those manic teen titles which can send you into hysterics because the plots are so convoluted! I honestly wonder how these guys thought of some of this stuff.

One of my favorite short-run titles is the seven issues of *Hi-Jinx* from ACG in 1947-48, subtitled *Teen-Age Animal Funnies*. Enough people are hep to "The Hepcats" (the lead strip) so that these have become a bit pricier, but they're still affordable and fun. As far as I know, it's the only example of mixing the teen-age and funny animal genres, and it works pretty well.

Another unique title is *Jetta* #5-7 (the only three issues) from Standard Comics in 1952-53, subtitled "Teen-Age Sweetheart of the 21st Century". This predates the Jetsons by a decade and it's a funny take-off on Archie. For example, Jetta and her boyfriend visit the Blast-In Movie featuring old-time flicks starring Humphrey Gocart. The series is filled with futuristic puns by the guys and gals at good old (new?) Neutron High. Jetta's boyfriend is named Arky. It looks as though Dan De Carlo did the art on this clever series, one of my "Fifties Favorites".

Also enjoyable is one of the most obscure of all short-lived humor titles, *Junior Hopp Comics*, which ran three issues in 1952 from SPM Publications, which evolved into the Stanmor group owned by Stanley Morse. Issue #2 carries an ad for what surely must be the most obscure comic book club of all time-- The Junior Hopp Club! Apparently, the publisher or editors felt that by ripping off the Archie Club they could make a killing. Instead, Junior Hopp lasted only one more issue and the Junior Hopp Club never got hopping. One can only speculate if any Junior Hopp membership cards exist today! And one can only wonder how many such comic book clubs never got off the ground compared to the few that made it big.

A REAL ARMFUL!
The misadventures of Centerville Jr. High teacher Betty Bliss made for some pretty lively reading beginning with "Meet Miss Bliss" #1 (May 1955).

One of the most popular short-run titles is ACG's *Dizzy Dames*, which ran six issues in 1952-53, when that tiny company was trying to expand under the editorship of Richard Hughes, the poor man's Stan Lee. Hughes was a one-man comic book factory and many collectors today enjoy searching for his company's output, which was virtually all his. *Dizzy Dames* is subtitled "Screwballs in Skirts!" and one can only say—well! This is my nominee for the comic with the dimmest view of women ever! There were Moronica (Miss Nit-Wit of 1953), Looney Lucy, Broadway Babes, Screwball Sal, Daffy Damsels, Dee Licious, Man-Huntin' Minnie of Delta Pu, Knothead Nellie, Knothead Nancy, and others. (I guess they couldn't remember one Knothead from another!) Actually, this comic is a bit overrated-- the title is what sells it, because the stuff inside really isn't nearly as good as the Atlas stuff of the same period.

To show how interchangeable a lot of

AN ARCHIE RIP-OFF!
Stevie #1 (Nov 1952) looks a lot like Archie, doesn't it? From the little-known comic company, Magazine Publishers.

this stuff was, check out the cover of *Sunny* #8 (the only issue) from IW Publications unauthorized reprint series of the late 50's and early 60's. This comic, which reprints some of Al Feldstein's early Fox teen art, also reprints the cover of Avon's *Penny* #3! The original gag involved Penny's boyfriend Bill carving their names into a tree while asking "Am I really the only one, Penny?" as she tries to hide the carvings of four earlier (or four other) boyfriends on an adjacent tree. Except that for IW's issue of *Sunny*, all the carvings have been changed from Penny to Sunny, and the correction scratches are still visible!

TEEN-AGE SWEETHEART OF THE 21st CENTURY
JETTA
WHAT D'YA SAY, SPACE PIGEON! LET'S GET THE O' HOT SAUCER AN' BEAT SOUND TO NICK'S BLAST-IN!
YOU'RE COOKING WITH SUPER-ATOMIC RADIATION, ARKY!

FUTURE FOLLIES!
Jetta #5 (Dec 1952) is a direct take-off on Archie — pardon the pun!

PEARLS OF WISDOM!
Stan Lee's creation Pearl Dimly was actually very funny. Here's the cover gag from "My Girl Pearl" #2 (Jun 1955).

Likewise, in the 1952-53 period, an outfit based in Chicago called Magazine Publishers (how's that for a generic name? Maybe it should have been Acme Comics!) published a direct knock-off of the Archie series, with titles called *Mazie*, *Stevie*, *Flat Top* and *Mortie* and characters almost directly stolen from the ranks of Riverdale Choklit Shoppe. Shameless! After Magazine Publishers went out of business in 1954 with *Mazie* #13, Harvey picked up Mazie a year later and ran with it (off and on) for three years, through #28 (August 1958). *Flat Top* wasn't as lucky– Harvey published the Reggie Mantle knock-off's schemes for only four issues before giving him a permanent trim in 1955. If you read these issues– and they're fun to collect– you'll be amazed at what blatant imitations they are of the Archie series.

There are dozens of other short series, many of them collectible and all with their own peculiarities, such as "Little Archie in Animal Land" (one of the really underrated and cute comic books of all time), "Tuffy" (the poor girl's Little Lulu in five issues from Standard Comics), "Della Vision" (Atlas's answer to the beauty of modern electronics) and "Lil' Jinx" (Archie's female version of Dennis the Menace). It's especially fun to trace the derivative nature of these comics, most of which have been long since forgotten except by collectors.

And if you still insist on collecting long runs– well, you can make your own list of all the "Dim Dame" comics, the "Denise the Girl Menace" comics, the off-beat teen comics and so on. Then you'll still have more than a hundred of each to collect. ■

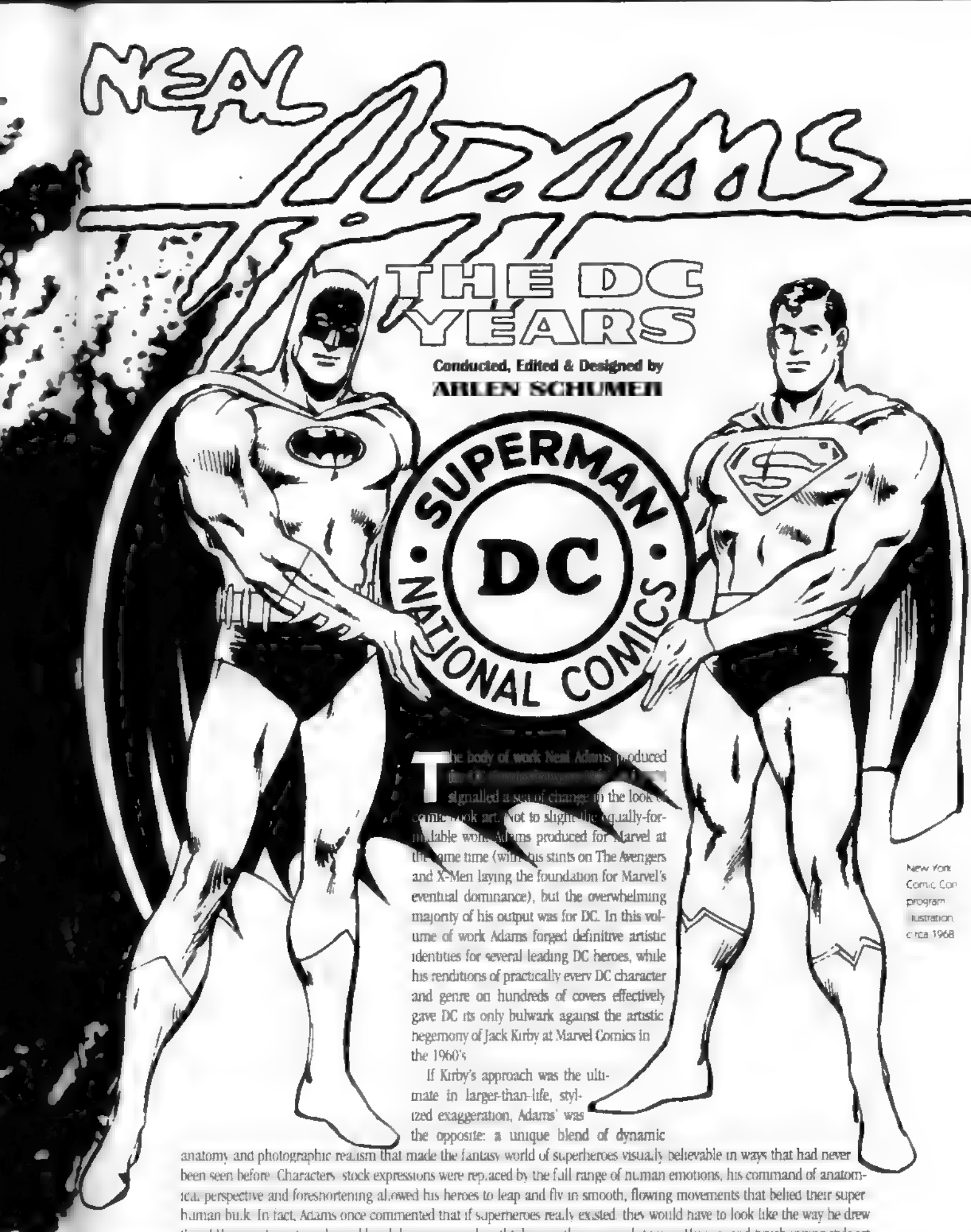
AMERICA'S DARLING DIM-WIT
MY GIRL PEARL
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
10¢
PEARL WHEN I'M WITH YOU I'M DIZZY! I'M FEVER SH! I CAN'T EAT OR SLEEP! SAY THOSE THREE WORDS THAT MEAN SO MUCH TO ME!
SEE YOUR DOCTOR!

Self-portrait done in the
full page house ad for DC Takes
Top Honors at Comic Art
Convention" (until 1974)
December 1973 issues

NEAL ADAMS

THE DC YEARS

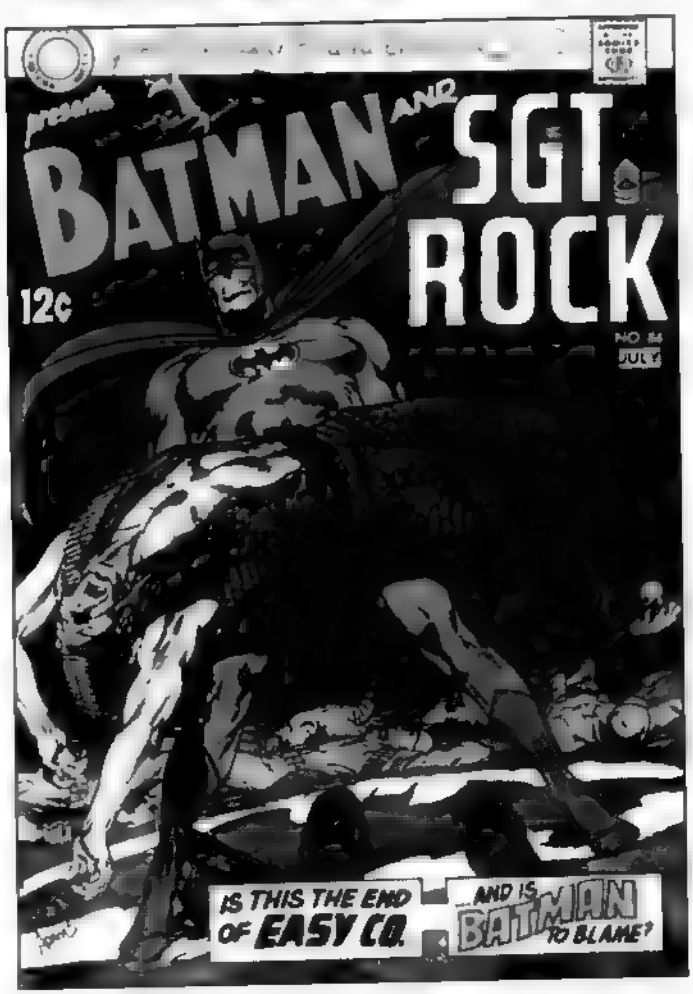
Conducted, Edited & Designed by
ARLEN SCHUMER



New York Comic Con program illustration, circa 1968

The body of work Neal Adams produced for DC Comics [illegible] signalled a sea of change in the look of comic book art. Not to slight the equally-formidable work Adams produced for Marvel at the same time (with his stints on The Avengers and X-Men laying the foundation for Marvel's eventual dominance), but the overwhelming majority of his output was for DC. In this volume of work Adams forged definitive artistic identities for several leading DC heroes, while his renditions of practically every DC character and genre on hundreds of covers effectively gave DC its only bulwark against the artistic hegemony of Jack Kirby at Marvel Comics in the 1960's.

If Kirby's approach was the ultimate in larger-than-life, stylized exaggeration, Adams' was the opposite: a unique blend of dynamic anatomy and photographic realism that made the fantasy world of superheroes visually believable in ways that had never been seen before. Characters' stock expressions were replaced by the full range of human emotions, his command of anatomical perspective and foreshortening allowed his heroes to leap and fly in smooth, flowing movements that belied their superhuman bulk. In fact, Adams once commented that if superheroes really existed, they would have to look like the way he drew them! His page layouts and panel breakdowns were as breathtaking as they were risk-taking. His pen-and-brush inking style set



new standards for the delineation of light and shadow. His visual acuity enabled Adams' writer collaborators to break new ground telling the kinds of stories that could be told in comic books. In doing so, he influenced an entire generation of artists, their eyes opened to the potentials of the medium itself.

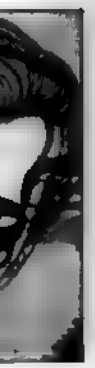
Adams occupies a unique place at the crossroads of comic book history; his work is the bridge between the end of the Silver Age of comic book art and today's diverse Modern Age. By becoming the realistic model for all artists who followed him into the field—think Brian Bolland and Bill Sienkiewicz—Adams' style also influenced just as many artists who created unorthodox drawing and illustrative styles in reaction to his model, breaking free from the shackles of realism"—think Walt Simonson (and Sienkiewicz, again!). From Howard Chaykin to Dave Sim to Frank Miller and countless others, from art directors to movie directors, the roster of Adams' "pupils" reads like a "who's who" of today's comic artists.

In a way, I am one of those pupils. I was lucky enough to be at the right age to experience Neal's work when it first appeared, yet old enough to have been a fan of DC's Silver Age artists, Carmine Infantino, Murphy Anderson, Gil Kane, and Curt Swan. That meant I was bowled over by how different Neal's work looked from his DC predecessors. He was one of my childhood idols, and influenced my life and work -yet how many of us can say they got to work for their childhood idols? I can, because I worked for Neal at Continuity between 1983 and '85, where I met my wife and partner, color artist Sherri Wolfgang. (Since leaving Continuity together in '86, we now run The Dynamic Duo Studio, Inc., creating comic art for the advertising and editorial markets.)

I always wanted to interview Neal about his pivotal role in the history of comics, when he entered the lumbering, slumbering industry giant that was DC Comics and proceeded to turn it, and the entire comic book field, on its ear! (Especially since this period had gone largely unexamined by comic book historians and fan magazines.)

My approach was simple—we went through a complete collection of his DC works in chronological order, which allowed Neal to react to only those works that moved him. My interviewing "style" took the form of observations to his reactions, rather than the conventional agenda of prepared questions. We did begin conventionally, though, at the beginning, when I asked Neal to describe the events in his early life that led up to his walking through the doors of DC Comics for the first time.

Neal Adams: I wasn't necessarily interested in becoming a comic book artist. I guess, like any other kid, my interests changed day to day



But as I got older, I focused on the artists that came from DC, because I remembered reading DC comics when I was younger.

Because I was so young in the early 1950's, I didn't understand the whole comics code thing. I didn't understand why all these comic book publishers closed down, especially EC. I loved all the EC artists. I loved Wally Wood and Jack Davis and Al Williamson, and I was aware of them enough that when I got together with other students at the School of Industrial Arts (a vocational school in Manhattan now known as the High School of Art & Design), we compared notes about our favorites.

If anything rocked us young students, it was Jack Kirby's Challengers of the Unknown, when Wally Wood was inking. It was simply incredible. Then Jack did Sky Masters of the Space Force, the comic strip that took him off Challengers. That just knocked us on our asses. It showed us that it was possible to do something really good in comics.

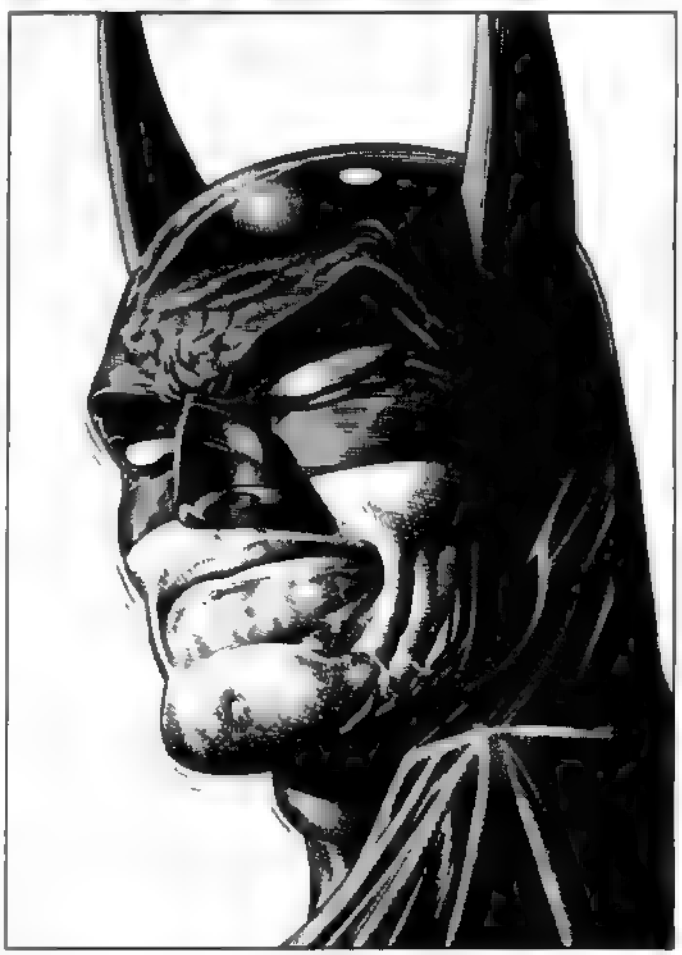
But the school dissuaded us from studying comic books in any way. That we were even interested was considered a form of insanity, because, after all, you couldn't make money in comic books. But because there was a sufficient group of us that wanted to study them for whatever reason, the School actually reformulated what they called the cartooning class into more of a cartooning/comic strip/comic book class, so we were able to do comic books. To a certain extent we forced the issue. There was no reason for the school to go along with it except we were so dedicated and wanted it so much.

Arlen Schumer: *Did any of your schoolmates follow you into comics?*

Neal: Not really. Some became art directors, some became animators, but basically nobody got into comic books from that year or the year before that or the year after that. It was a closed field. The school was right and we were wrong.

It was closed so much that people who had done the greatest comic book work of all were forced out. Al Williamson once-in-a-while did a comic book story for Dell or would be an assistant on John Prentice's Rick Kirby, but essentially, he was an unbelievable talent that got put aside. The industry made it necessary for Frank Frazetta, for

Farewell Thor cover by Kirby, 1966.
Brave & Bold cover by Adams, 1969.
Left-hand column, top to bottom: Superman by Curt Swan/George Klein, 1966. The Spectre by Murphy Anderson, 1967. Batman by Carmine Infantino/Murphy Anderson, 1967. Green Arrow by Mike Sekowsky/Bernard Sachs, 1960. Green Lantern by Gil Kane, 1967. Right-hand column: Adams versions.
This page: Large Batman head by Adams, 1974. Large Batman head by Brian Bolland, 1996. "I would be unhappy if my work was not considered to be a challenge to everybody else out there, that the stuff that's out there now has gone that far past mine." Adams.



"I wasn't necessari
becoming a comic

example, to become a penciler for Al Capp on Li'l Abner for nine years.

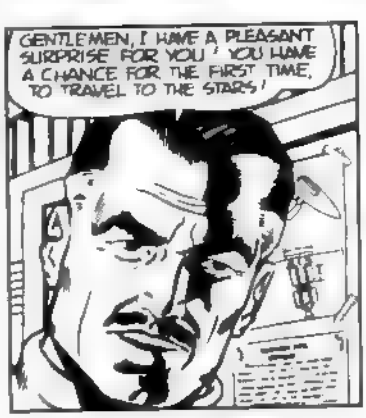
There was less work to give out, and an awful lot of the published work was just not good. I didn't quite understand why comic books weren't as good as they had been, but there were terrible titles. *Mr District Attorney, My Greatest Adventure*, these were not comics that appealed to the young at heart.

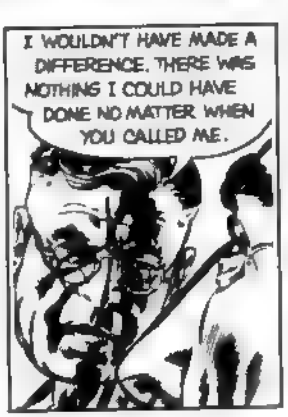
What stood out to me from the remnants of what was left in the comic book industry was Robert Kanigher's war comics, because Joe Kubert was there. I had followed Kubert's work from the time I was about 12, when he was doing *Tor* (1953), and he impressed me a great deal. I always loved Joe's stuff, his compositions and everything he did. I think of other artists as teachers. They have something to teach me, and if I'm smart enough I'll learn it, and be grateful to them. Like Kubert. He taught me how to spot blacks.

Arlen: *Did the revival of the Flash in '56 and the dawn of the Silver Age register with you?*

Neal: Nobody thought of it as the Silver Age. It was just one of the editors at DC Comics trying to bring back the Flash, but this was a new Flash. Carmine Infantino did some good pencils, but I think a lot was lost in the inking. I bought *Flash* every month hoping Joe Kubert would come back! (Kubert inked the very first Flash story in *Showcase* #4, 1956). *Green Lantern* was about the best of the new books because of Gil Kane, whose work took giant strides at the time. I didn't think they were the greatest comic books in the world, but that was all there was.

AND AS THE STARTLING WORLD-RINGING MESSAGE REACHES THE EARS OF THE FAMED MEMBERS OF THE DARING QUARTET...
ACE MORGAN--CRACK JET PILOT
ROCKY DAVIS--CHAMPION WRESTLER
SOS--YOUR ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED
SOS--COME AT ONCE
RED RYAN--MOUNTAIN CLIMBER
PROF HALEY--EXPERT SKINDIVER





Top: Challengers of The Unknown by Kirby/Wood, 1957. Center: Sky Masters of the Space Force by Kirby/Wood 1958. Left bottom: Adams does Wood panel from Sky Masters sample page done at age 16, 1957. Right bottom: Panel from Ben Casey 1965. Wood fully integrated into Adams style.

Neal: It was that America had put

So, when I got out of school in 1959, I went to DC Comics with samples. I showed a war page, an Adam Strange page. I didn't even like Adam Strange, I just did it to impress them. And if you looked at my samples, you'd say, "He's professional. Hire this guy." But I couldn't get past the front door. They sent a nice man out named Bill Perry, and it was as if my old school had given him a tape recording of what to say. "You're wasting your time, I'm sorry, you're a very talented young man, you should do something else, blah, blah, blah..." He wasn't even allowed to take the samples in to the editors. Then, strangely, he quietly apologized.

Arlen: *Was there a hiring freeze at DC at this time?*

Neal: It was worse. There are no words for it. Not only weren't they hiring high school and college students, they weren't hiring the greats! I've heard stories of highly professional people like John Severin doing wonderful war stories for DC and then given the heave-ho. There was Mort Drucker, who we all recognized early on as being fantastic. You couldn't get better than Mort Drucker. Yet he worked in the production room at DC Comics.

Arlen: *Was this "total freeze" a result of simply not having enough work to pass out during the dry period following the establishment of the Comics Code? Or was there more to it?*

arily interested in mic book artist."

down comic books. Comic books were like toilet paper. Garbage. Just as I can't tell you how bad it was to be a black person in 1950's America from a white person's point of view--and this is an odd analogy to make--the same thing was true about comic books. They were considered to be one of the lowest things you could do.

When I got into the field, you couldn't get artists to say they drew comic books. They were literally ashamed. They would only admit to being illustrators. They were more proud of work they did outside of comics. A good part of my first few years doing comics was spent being a psychiatric cheerleader to these guys, saying, "We're doing comics and they're paying us, isn't this great?" I'm talking about professionals who'd been in it for 15 years, they needed somebody to tell them how great it was, how lucky they were, they were so down in the mouth all the time.

Things didn't change for a long time, and from my point of view, I'm happy they didn't. Fighting your way into comics is almost an honor. It is, after all, a privilege to

ADAM EXPLAINS
THAT SUB'LL BE READY TO FIRE TOMORROW! THE ONLY WAY I CAN GET TO IT IS THROUGH THE GUARD SHIP SO..
WHEN ADAM FINISHES HIS EXPLANATION TO ALANNA!---
TAKE CARE, ADAM!
ADAM FLIES UP TOWARDS THE GUARD SHIP..
A HUMAN! OPEN FIRE!
YOU BOYS ARE IN FOR A LITTLE SURPRISE!
JUST AS THE HUMANS ARE ABOUT TO FIRE..
??COMMANDER! COMMANDER! THE HUMAN HE JIE HAS DISAPPEARED!
THE SHIP COMMANDER SENDS HIS MEN OUTSIDE THE SHIP TO SEARCH FOR ADAM STRANGE!
--AND DON'T COME BACK WITHOUT HIM!
AS THE COMMANDER CLOSES THE AIR LOCK
SLAM

do comic books. It's a privilege to do art in any form.

Arlen: *So after being rebuffed by DC, where did you go?*

Neal: I tried to get work at Archie Comics because it was the only other place around. I brought in samples of The Fly and they were less than enthusiastic. They suggested I do samples of Archie pages. I did four sets of samples. They criticized them, didn't think I quite got it, but maybe they'd give me some joke pages. So I became the first new guy in comic books in how many years doing Archie joke pages.

Every time I'd bring pages in, I would ask if they showed my Fly samples to either Jack Kirby or Joe Simon, his partner at the time.

I nagged them so much that eventually they said, "Look, we're gonna call Joe, he saw your samples." So Joe Simon gets on the

(Top left) Our Fighting Forces cover by Kubert, 1952. Portrait of Kubert by Adams for '70 Comic Art Convention awards ad. Tor #1 cover by Kubert, 1953. Adam Strange sample page done by Adams for DC in 1957. "He's professional. Hire this guy!"

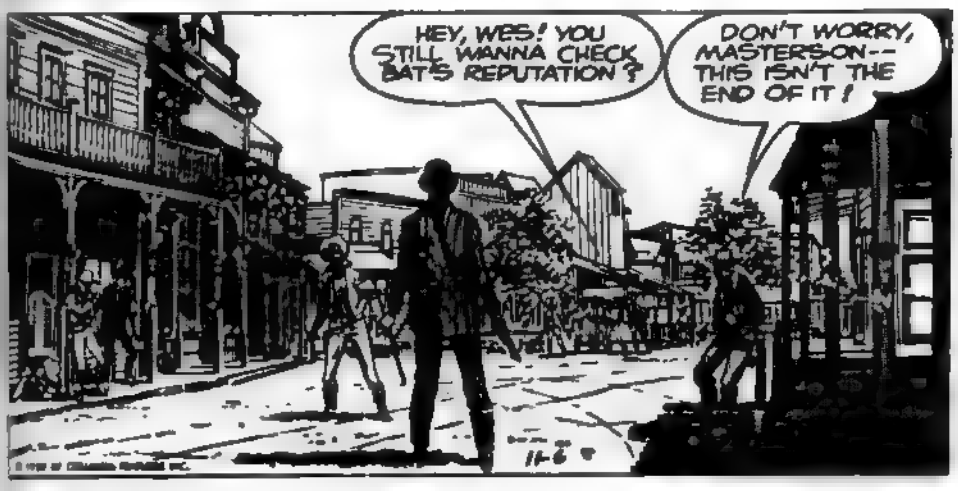
phone and says, "Neal, I'm gonna do you the biggest favor of your life. You're not gonna think it's a favor, but I'm rejecting you. Because believe me, you don't want to be in comics. You're a young man, you have a bright future ahead of you, the worst thing I could possibly do is have you draw comic books. Go out and get a good job, be an art director, you're very talented. I know this isn't sitting well with you

And in my mind I'm going, "No, it isn't sitting well with me!

Arlen: *You felt you'd heard all this before?*

Neal: But not on the verge of getting work. I was dying and he was killing me with good intentions. There is a part of me that understands that very much. But not then. I was so unhappy. Vic Gorelick, who continues to work there and remains a friend, felt sorry for me, and pulled out one of the sample Fly pages I'd done. They'd cut out a panel on the bottom with a razor blade! "We used this in a Fly story. I'm gonna pay you a third of a page," and that's how I got my first superhero work printed!

Shortly after that I met Howard Nostrand, an ex-comic book artist who used to work for Bob Powell. He needed a background assistant on a comic strip based on the Bat Masterson TV series. At the same time, there was a lot



GUNFIGHT, EH? OKAY, WHERE'S BAT MASTERSON! HE'S GONE TOO FAR THIS TIME!
THAT WOULD BE SHERIFF ANDREWS-- WHICH MEANS WE'RE NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET!
HERRY NOSTRAND

© COLUMBIA FEATURES INC

of commercial illustration going through Nostrand's studio, so I picked up a lot of techniques. Things that I didn't learn in school I learned in that studio… and I was like a sponge. A guy there named Elmer Wexler, who taught me a lot of things, also did work for an art service called Johnstone and Cushing that specialized in comic-style illustration. When Bat Masterson ended, I did samples for them.

What was so wonderful about working at J&C was that up and coming artists that might have otherwise been in the comic book field worked there because they paid the best. I fell in with this new group of guys that was doing very commercial-type comics, taking Polaroids and tracing them. I was, again, like a sponge. Every new idea that came along I would try immediately. By the time I was 20 years old, I had such an incredible education.

Then I got the call from Al Capp's brother Jerry about doing a comic strip based on the Ben Casey TV series. His partner, Elliot Kaplan, coincidentally, had just gotten the comic strip rights to Dr. Kildare, so there was a little jealousy going on. Elliot got a hold of Ken Bald, and Jerry got a hold of me. Turned out pretty good for Jerry, 'cause the samples I did went to one syndicate and sold it. The strip sold all around the world, not just in America. Partially, I hope, because the artwork was so good.

The reason the artwork was good was because I was very competitive in those days. The New York papers had all the good strips like Big Ben Bolt, Sam Dooke's Heart of Juliet Jones, Leonard Starr's Orphan, Dan Barry's Flash Gordon. Every day I would sit with them and go, "Okay, who's best today?" I was so anxious to beat everybody that I just made it my business. I would do something new everyday just to exercise my mental faculties. There I was, 21 years old, with a comic strip. I had all this history to look at, all these guys to look at, and say, "I'm building on you. You did this, now I'm going to do this." After about a year, seven out of ten days, mine would be best.

Arlen: *There were artists who wanted a comic strip their whole lives, it was the prize, and you had it at age 20.*

Neal: Yes, it was the prize, and I got it. In all honesty, I had no right to have it, but I worked hard for it. The syndicate was happy with the sales, so I didn't short anybody on it. But it was a rare privilege. And when it ended, I decided I would become an illustrator.

I took six months off and started to paint paintings in the style of Bernie Fuchs, Turpning, and Al Parker, and put together a pretty good portfolio. I took it to a few places, children's books, magazines, and then I left it in an advertising agency where I was doing storyboards for somebody. About a week later I went back to get it and it was gone. Bye-bye portfolio, six month's work and the beginning and end of a new career.

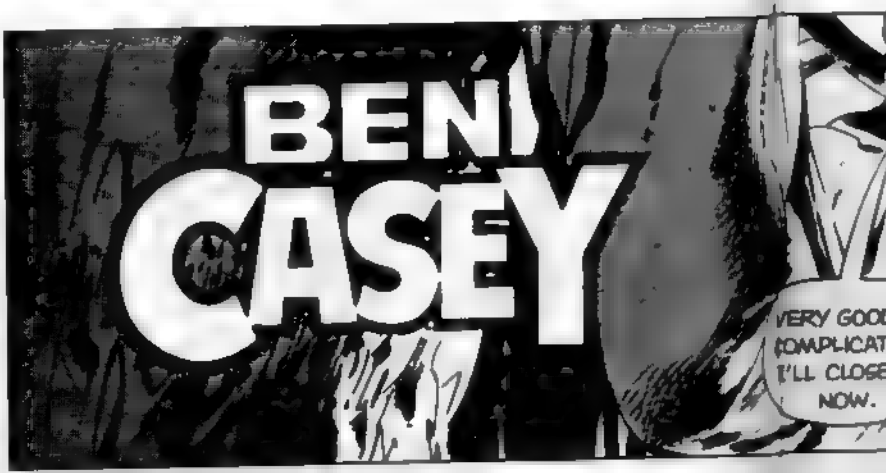
So I had to make a living now, I thought. "Well, maybe I'll try comic books." I went not to DC, but as luck would have it to Warren Publications, where I met Archie Goodwin. He's one of the nicest people I've ever met, still remains, in my opinion, one of the nicest people in comics. Archie gave me a shot, and I started to draw stories for him. I did each one in a different style, one in wash, one in pencil. I took photographs for all of them. Unfortunately, I was acting too much the artist, applying tremendous amounts of technique, and it was a burden. It seemed to me it would be easier to do regular comic books.

So I took a chance and went over to DC Comics. Marvel Comics was finally waking DC up, and DC was beginning to see new people. The doors were still pretty closed but you had the sense you could get in and see some

facing page: Archie Joke Page—circa 1960. Adam's first published sometimes art. Archie Comics. The Fly—circa 1959. (Center) Self promotion piece (Cue). Neal Adams' jobs include illustrations, full-color illustrations, storyboards, even comic books, just about anything. Above: Bat Masterson strip by Howard Nostrand, backgrounds by Adams, 1959. Below: AT&T/Chip Martin strip appearing in Boy's Life Magazine, circa early 60's.

Chip Martin
COLLEGE REPORTER
meets
"THE NIGHT PEOPLE"
RRRRRRRRRRR
AFTER MIDNIGHT, CHIP THE CITY BELONGS TO A HANDFUL OF IMPORTANT PEOPLE. DOCTORS, POLICEMEN, FIREMEN. PEOPLE WHO PROTECT OUR SAFETY AND OUR PROPERTY

Demonstration piece for the Ben Casey job in 1962
Dr. Kildare panel by Ken Bald, 1962



body. I made an appointment with Robert Kanigher and showed my stuff. And it was as though I had fallen out of the sky. They called Sol Harrison (DC's longtime production manager) out and showed him my work and asked, "Sol, do you think he can do comic books for us?" And Sol answered, "Is that a question? He can draw. What's your problem?" And so they basically offered me work.

Arlen: *How did your first published work at DC, some short war stories for editor Kanigher in early 1967, come about?*

Neal: When I was finishing up with Ben Casey, I was approached by Capp's brother Elliot again. He said, "There's a book called the "Green Berets" and I have the comic strip rights." He took me to lunch where I met the author Robin Moore, who regaled me with stories of Vietnam. All of which turned my stomach. I knew I wasn't going to say yes, so I said, "Elliot, there are comic book artists that would be great for this strip, one guy in particular who would be better than me, by far." And I suggested he call Joe Kubert. He did, and Joe agreed to work on it. As I reflect on it, in a strange way I had probably made the niche for me to work on DC war comics, because now Kubert couldn't do as many stories for Kanigher.

Arlen: *What was Kanigher like to work with?*

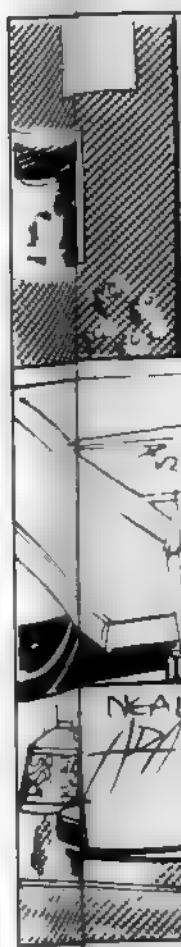
Neal: Kanigher was mean and tough. He's like a military guy. If he gives you a tough time, and you don't put up with it, he respects you. We came to loggerheads one time, but it actually worked out fine.

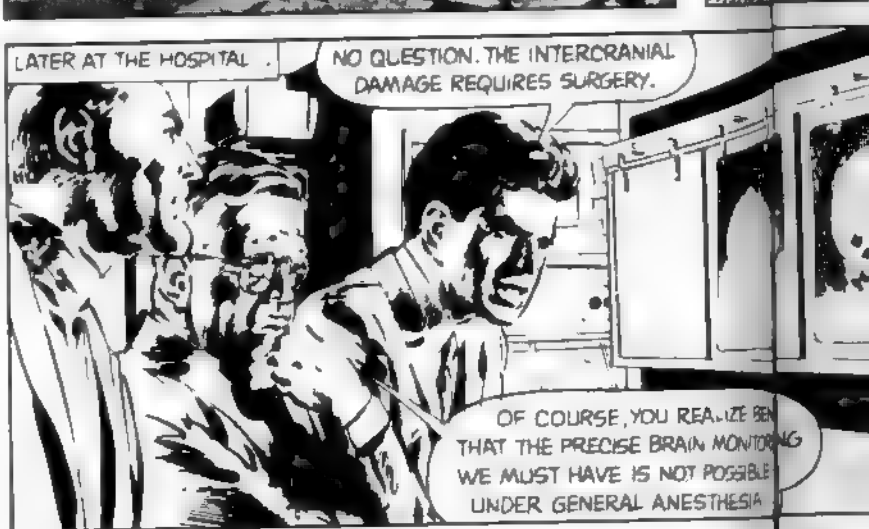
Arlen: *In late '67, you start doing all of editor Mort Weisinger's Superman family covers. How is it that a guy who had just "fallen out of the sky" was entrusted with the company's flagship characters?*

Neal: Weisinger never wanted to give me a cover, and he made it very clear. He said, "I don't like your work, I don't want you doing covers for me." But things happened at that time very quickly up at DC. They had recently decided to let Carmine Infantino be art director, and he was looking to lock himself into place. He just felt, "We've got this new guy, what are we going to have him do?" I could do war stories, superheroes, *Jerry Lewis*. Whatever they gave me, I could do. Every day from their point of view was a revelation.

So, when Carmine saw that I was not afraid to work on his cover layouts as well as my own, he wanted me to do covers. First I inked a Curt Swan Superman cover, making it a little bit more exciting. But that wasn't enough for Carmine. He insisted I do complete Superman covers, but Weisinger was dead set against it. So I said to Mort privately, "If they want me to do covers and you don't, how about letting me try a couple? If you don't like what I do, if you're unhappy, I'll back off, I don't care."

Within two covers, I had won Mort over, because I gave him what he want-




LATER AT THE HOSPITAL.
NO QUESTION. THE INTERCRANIAL DAMAGE REQUIRES SURGERY.
OF COURSE, YOU REALIZE BEN THAT THE PRECISE BRAIN MONITORING WE MUST HAVE IS NOT POSSIBLE UNDER GENERAL ANESTHESIA

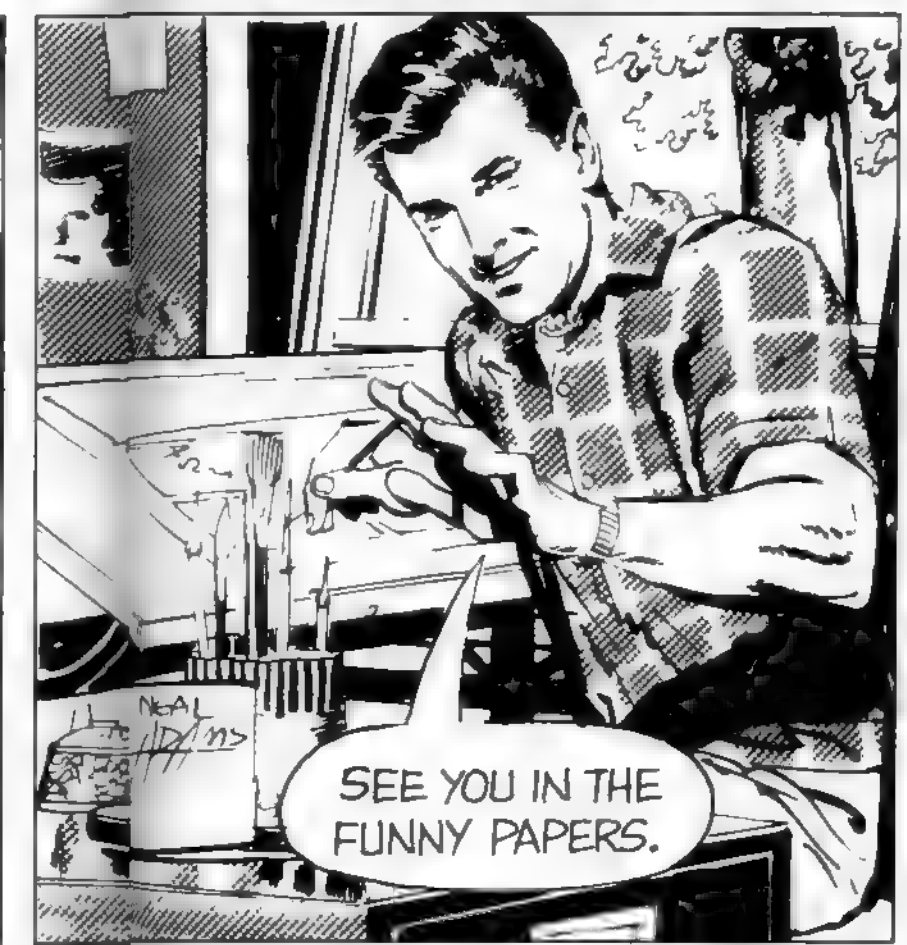
Center, top: Ben Casey Sunday panel, Nov. 65. Left: Photo from The Cartoonist Cookbook, 1966. Right: "See you in the funny papers"—unknown source.
Center, bottom: Casey Sunday panels from Nov. 65.

Facing page, top: Panel done in ink wash from "Curse of The Vampire," Creepy #14, Apr. 1967. Below: Panel done in pencil from "Voodoo Drum," Eerie #10, Jul. 67.

ed. If he didn't like a sketch, I'd make another sketch. He would always put balloons on covers. I didn't have a problem with that. I was a professional. I wasn't a kid off the street. I'd had a career before I came there. That's what DC didn't understand.

All of a sudden, I was affecting sales with the covers I was doing, so Weisinger said, "I want Neal Adams to do all my covers!" He'd get mad at me if I wasn't available to do a cover for him. To a certain extent it added to Carmine's star, almost as though Carmine had discovered me.

Arlen: *How tight were Infantino's cover layouts?*



REALIZE BEN
AIN MONITOR
OT POSSIBLE
ESTHESIA.
THEN WE USE A LOCAL. KEEP HIM CONSCIOUS.
BUT WHAT ABOUT HIS EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL CONDITION? WE NEED HIS CONSCIOUS COOPERATION.

Neal: I felt Carmine basically had one cover layout: somebody standing with their legs spread apart and doing something. The price I paid for being the "house cover artist" was having to do some covers like that. I didn't mind.

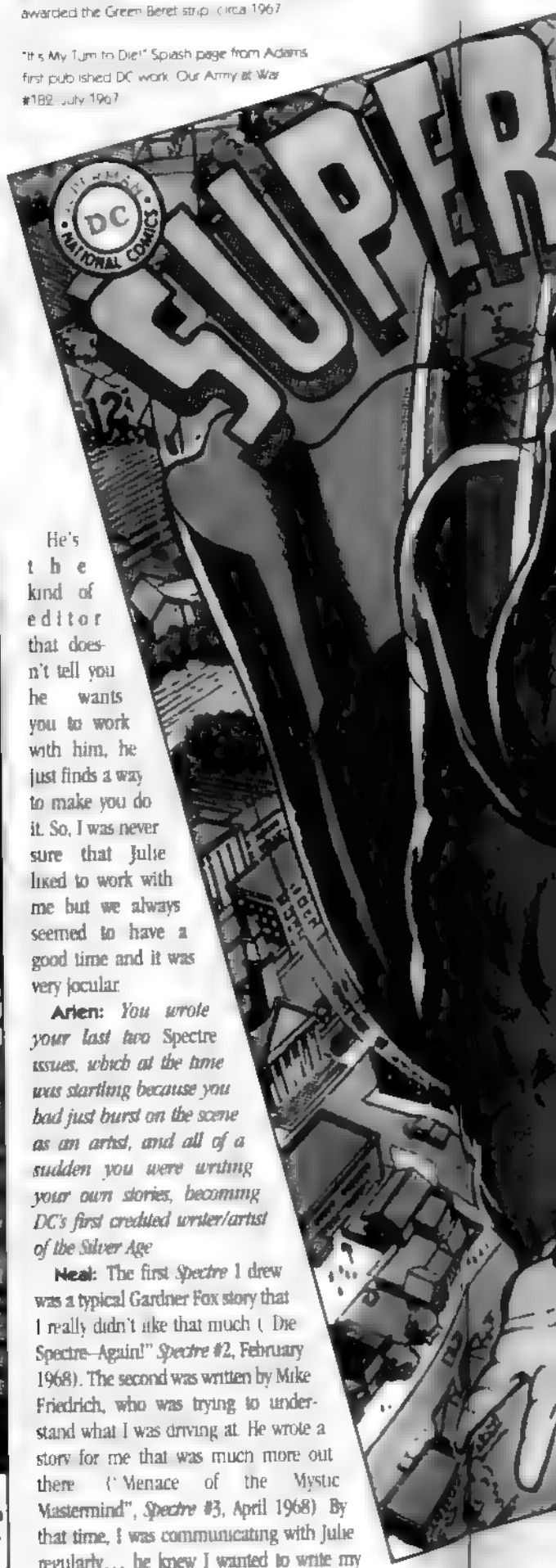
Arlen: *The first superhero series you take on is The Spectre for Julius Schwartz, the first of many collaborations with the quintessential DC editor.*

Neal: Julie Schwartz was always a very gruff guy, one of those "grumpy" editors. If you think of the old style editors, that's Julie. Nothing gets past him, you can't fool him. You have to come up with the goods.

...ustration presented to Joe Kubert upon his being awarded the Green Beret strip. Circa 1967

"It's My Turn to Die!" Splash page from Adams' first published DC work. Our Army at War #182, July 1967

IT'S MY TURN TO DIE!
GRUMP
BLAM
ANOTHER PATROL, MAJOR? SURE! ONLY THIS TIME I'M LEADING IT!
YOU THINK I CAN KEEP SENDING MY MEN OUT WHEN I KNOW THEY'RE GOING TO GET KILLED! I CAN'T DO IT ANY MORE! I CAN'T BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF ANOTHER SOLDIER!
IT'S MY TURN TO DIE!
YOU'RE THROUGH, CAPT. SANDERS! IF THERE'S ONE MAN WE CAN'T USE UP IN THE FRONT LINES — IT'S AN OFFICER WHO HASN'T THE GUTS TO CARRY OUT HIS ORDERS!



He's the kind of editor that doesn't tell you he wants you to work with him, he just finds a way to make you do it. So, I was never sure that Julie liked to work with me but we always seemed to have a good time and it was very jocular.

Arlen: *You wrote your last two* Spectre *issues, which at the time was startling because you had just burst on the scene as an artist, and all of a sudden you were writing your own stories, becoming DC's first credited writer/artist of the Silver Age.*

Neal: The first *Spectre* I drew was a typical Gardner Fox story that I really didn't like that much ("Die Spectre–Again!" *Spectre* #2, February 1968). The second was written by Mike Friedrich, who was trying to understand what I was driving at. He wrote a story for me that was much more out there ("Menace of the Mystic Mastermind", *Spectre* #3, April 1968). By that time, I was communicating with Julie regularly… he knew I wanted to write my

ERBOY
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IT'S DOWN DOWN AND AWAY for SUPERBOY in "The BIG FALL"
GREAT KRYPTON! I'VE LOST ALL MY POWERS NOW! I'M FALLING! I'LL BE KILLED!

Portrait of Infantino by Adams for '70 Comic Art Convention awards ad.

Cover of Superboy #143 "The Big Fall" Dec. '67 (Top right) Interior panel by A. Plastino illustrating the same scene as Adams' cover. Examples like these illustrate why so many felt that Adams' art seemed right years apart from the rest of the DC Silver Age bullpen.

own Spectre story, and I felt I understood his type of story.

When I was in high school, I wrote my own comic book stories as samples. I studied Schwartz' style as an editor, and wrote stories that would be Julie Schwartz stories. A Julie Schwartz story is one in which one major element in the story is a scientific fact that few people knew.

This came in handy, because later on, at DC, I would listen to Julie talk to his writers and shoot down story idea after story idea. But he seemed very happy with my scripts.

If Julie likes your story, he'll help you with the plotting. If it had an empty hole, he'd fill it. Which was what I liked least about working with Julie because I wanted to fill my own holes.

Arlen: *You segued from the Spectre to Deadman, the series, in which you were able to, in your own words, strut your stuff".*

Neal: I was doing the Spectre when Carmine was finishing up the first Deadman. I don't know how interested he was in continuing it. I'm not altogether sure he didn't do the first issue as a throwaway. The Deadman series was only considered to be new, it wasn't considered to be good. It was pretty silly, in a way. But since Deadman was a character so much like the Spectre, I was the logical choice to follow Carmine. I didn't want to give up the Spectre, because the issues and concepts were on a higher plane than Deadman's. But they said, "Deadman's only 18 pages long, couldn't you do them both?" So I said, "Fine."

Arlen: *The cover of the first Deadman story you penciled and inked* (Strange Adventures

Far left: Full-page from The Spectre #3, Apr. 68, featuring guest star Wildcat.

Left: Panel from "Stop That Kid—Before He Wrecks The World," The Spectre #4, Jun. 68. This was Adams' first published DC writing.

Left bottom: Double-page spread from "Fugitive From Justice!" The Spectre #5, Aug. 68. Adams' second published script. Center top: Illustration from San Diego Comic-Con program book.

EEEP
HOWL
A TYRANNOSAURUS REX! LOOK! LOOK MOMMY
JIMMY--GET AWAY! RUN!!
GREAT CRIMES! I BROUGHT A TYRANNOSAURUS BACK WITH ME AND THERE'S THAT WE ARE'VE AGAIN
I FEEL LIKE A HUMAN WHO HASN'T SLEPT FOR A WEEK... BUT I'VE GOT TO STOP THAT PRIMITIVE TERRIBLE MENACE SOMEHOW
TRY TO DISTRACT HIM!
YIIII! A MONSTER!
A DRAGON

#207, December 1967) is one of the most groundbreaking covers in the history of comics. The photo-realistic, multiple heads in the background were striking enough, printed on a green color field, but it was the shiny, high-gloss sheen of Deadman's red costume, rendered with crosshatching and finish, that seemed to announce a whole new look in comic book inking.

Neal: One of the things that I brought to comic books was not only the knowledge to do that stuff, but the awareness of what had been done before to build on. I would go to old book shops and buy old comic books and look at artists that didn't work at DC or appear anywhere else. I looked at the old EC comics and believed in them. If you look back at EC, you'll find the same kind of amazing Reed Crandall, Al Williamson, Alex Raymond, all those guys knew how to do that. Frank Frazetta did it all the time.

I had seen all the comic artists, but it seemed they all inked with one kind of line. Everybody

(Below right) Panel from The Heart of Juliet Jones by Stan Drake, note all the different textures rendered by Drake in this single panel

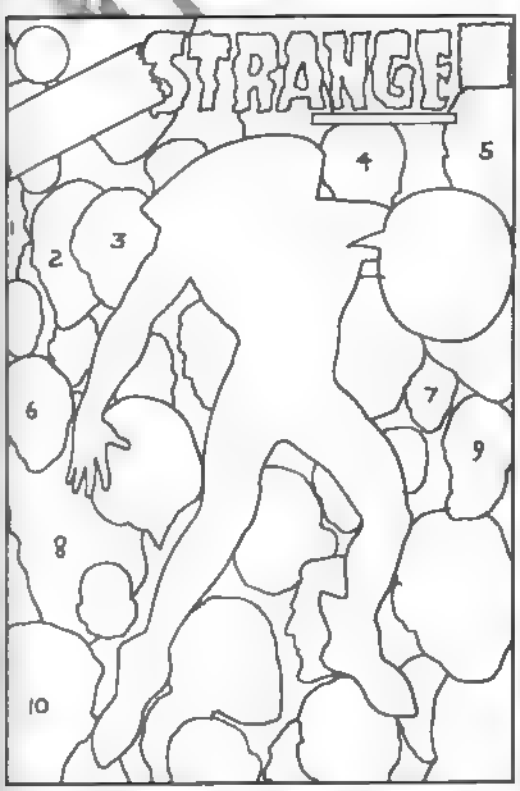
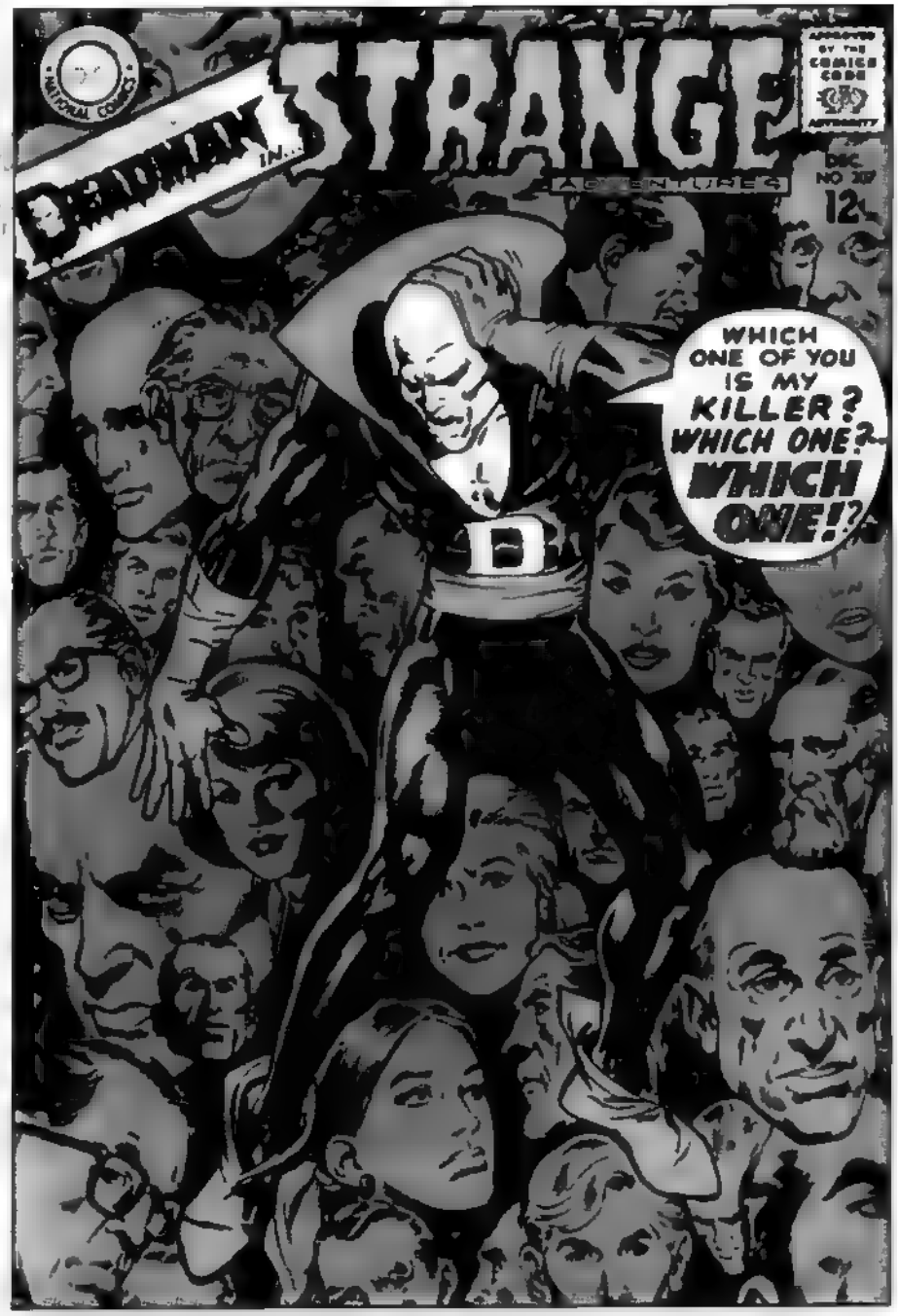


Diagram guide to the faces on the cover of Strange Adventures #20 Dec. 67, with comments by Adams 1 Joe Letterese DC letterer 2 Jay Scott Pike 3 Ira Schnappe DC letterer of the original Superman and Batman logos created the logos of practically every DC title for over 30 years-a legend! "They forcibly retired him and he went to Florida. He wasn't sick a day in his life, but within a half year he was dead." 4 Jerry Serpe, DC colorist and production man 5 Jack Miller writer editor of Deadman at the time 6 Jack Adler 7 Lee Elias-type face 8 A type of face I began developing during my Ben Casey days, evolved into Ra's Al Ghul 9 God 10 Co-head of production at DC, Ed Eisenberg


NATIONAL COMICS
DEADMAN IN... STRANGE ADVENTURES
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
DEC. NO 207
12¢
WHICH ONE OF YOU IS MY KILLER? WHICH ONE? WHICH ONE!?

basically did that thin-to-thick-to-thin brush stroke. And then I started to study Stan Drake's stuff. He put down a line that would start thin, go thick and stay thick. Or he'd be able to put down a dead line with flow in and out.

I realized as I compared it to everyone's lines, that Stan Drake seemed to have created new lines. We're talking about the difference between cartoonists who had one kind of line, and an illustrator who used many different lines to illustrate. If all you had was one real line, for somebody to come along with five or six different kinds of lines was a revolution in renderings. Those lines meant Stan had a variety that nobody else had.

So, I jumped on the Stan Drake bandwagon and started to create my own kinds of lines.

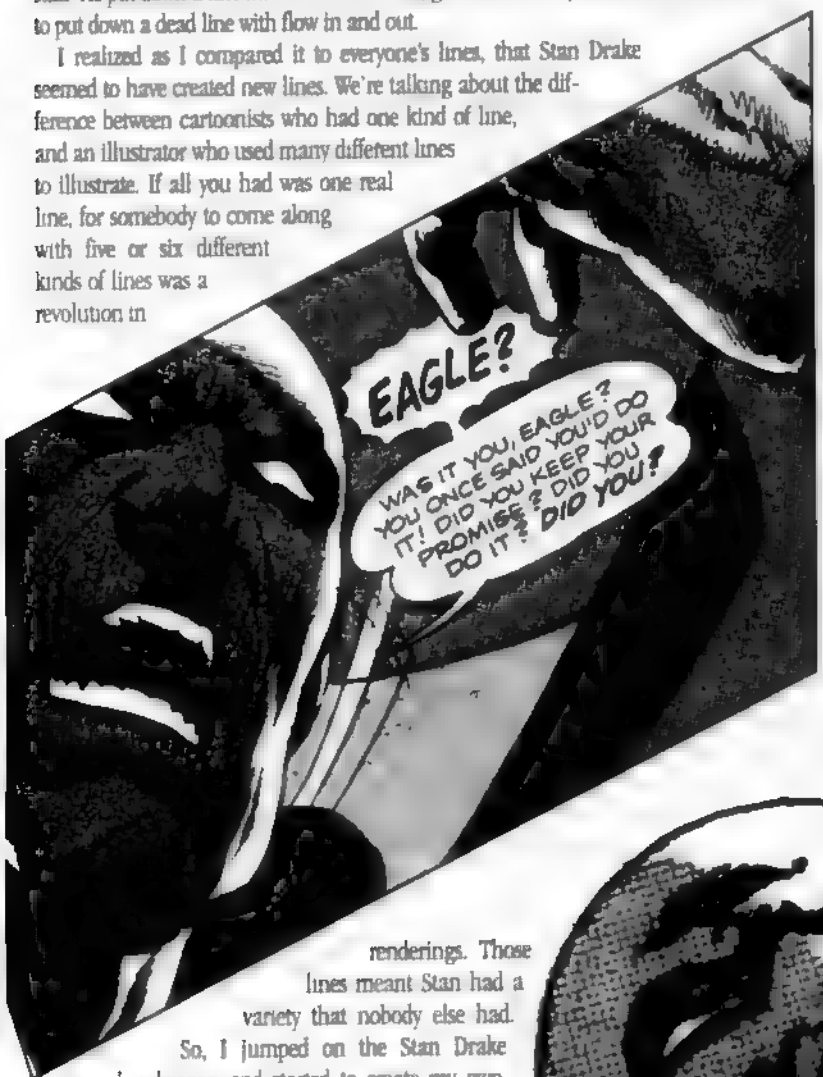
If you render well with these lines, you're able to do more things when you render. You can do textures. You can do wood that looks like wood. Metal that looks like metal. Linen that looks like linen. Lines on hands, as opposed to lines on clothing have a certain softness. They're not cartoons. Better, different textures add a flavor to work that is hard to define by other people.

Arlen: *In these early covers and stories, you ink with a bolder, more cartoony line—cartoonier than Ben Casey or your more mature DC work.*

Neal: My early stuff for DC does look pretty crude, compared to Ben Casey, because I wasn't using photographs. I had taken photographs for Ben Casey because realistic strips required tremendous amounts of soap opera and facial expressions, and I could afford to, because I had the time and money. But, when I did comic books I had no choice but to work without photographs and, in a way, it was like learning a new skill, exercising muscles I hadn't used enough yet. But I was always using muscles. I didn't become mature doing Ben Casey, then "de-mature" at DC, and then mature again. I was simply learning a new way.

"The stark human emotion

HA, HA! LOOK AT ME. I'M BAWLING MY HEART OUT!
BUT THAT'S NUTS-- I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO HAVE ANY FEELINGS!
I'M NOTHING--A ZERO-- A DEAD MAN!... AAHHH-- I COULD BURST!



Arlen: *We had accepted as "realistic" the Marvel Comics super heroes talking about their problems, but they were still drawn cartoonishly. It was the stark human emotion of Deadman rendered almost photo-realistically that opened up everyone's eyes.*

Neal: The idea of taking photographs and turning them into drawings was to learn the humanity of the charac-

emotion of Deadman!

front end moved fast and the back end slowed down. Or maybe it was easy to follow the story with the eye, or I intentionally irritated the reader so it wasn't.

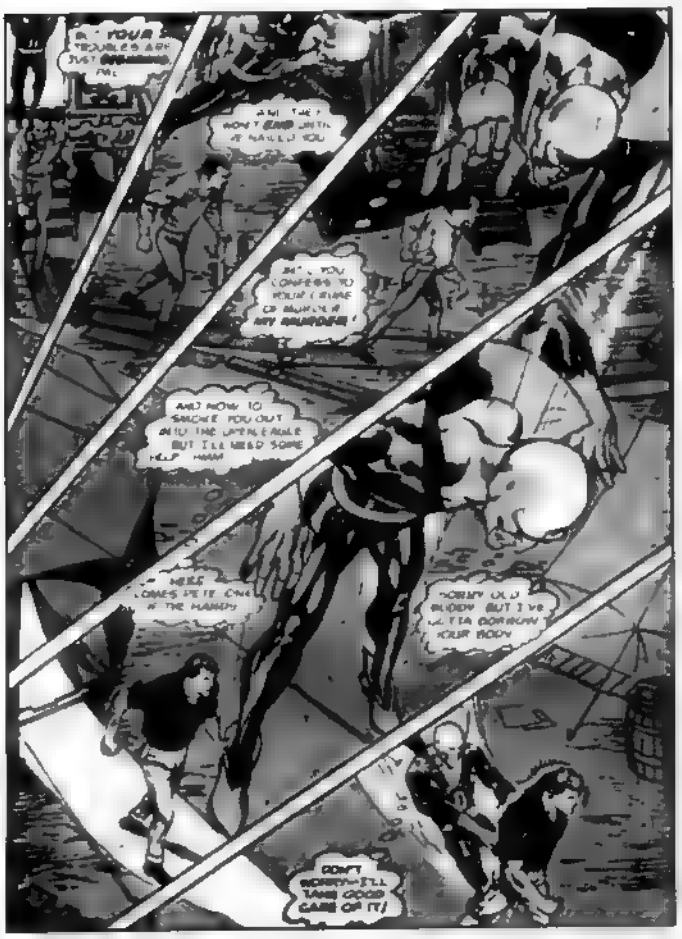
These kinds of storytelling things I learned doing Ben Casey. Since Ben Casey was a soap opera, it wasn't by its nature exciting. How do you bring excitement to the dull? You make the audience think they're getting more than they're actually getting. You go into a close-up, you see details that you might not otherwise see, you create an expression that draws the eye, you move the camera. Design, layout and composition are what keep the audience interested.

I made it ters. I had worked from photographs so much I'd be able to draw the person inside so the reader would respond to the face and expression as though somebody was in there. Suddenly it wasn't just a drawing on a page, it was a person. And when that person you cared about suddenly felt anguish, you felt it along with them.

I go through comic books constantly and see characters saying things that don't match the expressions on their faces. Nobody seems to contort their face or feel the emotion. These things get forgotten because many artists are not willing to learn how to draw a face.

Arlen: *Your innovative panel breakdowns and page layouts also had tremendous impact.*

Neal: For three and a half years, I had been drawing daily strips three panels across… which was very constricting. Suddenly the opportunity to design a comic book page was available to me, and I just blasted out. The freedom was incredible. Every time I drew a story, I paced it differently. Maybe the



my business to find something that would keep the audience interested so they would read the writing. If you've got three pages of talking heads, it's the job of the artist to make those talking heads as interesting as the action. Almost like taking the reader by the shirt front and saying, "Read this!" And if you do your job right, suddenly the audience reads the writer because they're fascinated by the artist's solution to the problem.

This is part of what entertains a reader, that you played with them one way and now you're going to play with them another way. The reader has said, okay, entertain me, but if you bore me, I'm not with you. So the artist has to play the game. The writer has a part in the game but is pretty helpless because it's in the hands of the artist. If the artist can keep the game going, the reader get to the climax and gets the payoff.

And you can tell the artists who haven't studied because they'll blame the writer. They'll say they got a boring script. What it really is, is a boring handle. That's the difficulty… and the challenge.

Arlen: *Can great art save a bad story? Can a great story survive despite bad art?*

Neal: The question is, what is great art? Is great art beautiful drawings, or is great art, art that tells a story well? In a comic book, the goal is the story.

People constantly talk to me about Deadman as though it was the greatest art I ever did, but what they're remembering are the stories. They remember waiting for the next issue, but not for the art. For the story. They're remembering this driving force to find The Hook that accelerated as the story went on. They wanted to know, who was The Hook?

(Top left: Full page from Strange Adventures #209, Feb. '68
Below, Ben Casey "hidden head" Sunday page, circa 1965
Facing page, Deadman "hidden head" page from Strange Adventures #216, Feb. '69

BEN CASEY
I WAS SUMMONED BY MR. BERCHEFF DR. CASEY. I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND
OF COURSE, DR. MELNIKOFF I CAN ONLY HOPE YOU VIEW MISS PETROVNA'S CASE AS A MEDICAL PROBLEM!
I WILL BE GLAD TO STATE MY VIEWS, DOCTOR
TELL HIM, COMRADE DOCTOR! TELL HIM, YOU WILL TAKE OVER!
BERCHEFF, THIS IS A HOSPITAL. YOUR LOUD NOISES ARE IN POOR TASTE!
HEY, I MIGHT LIKE THIS GUY
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND
BERCHEFF, GO IN THERE AND WAIT UNTIL I AM READY TO TALK TO YOU.
LATER ..
I CONCUR COMPLETELY, DR. CASEY. INTERCRANIAL HEMORRHAGE... YOU SHOULD OPERATE IMMEDIATELY...
AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT BERCHEFF—
—HE IS OUT OF HIS ELEMENT, AND I SHALL ENJOY TELLING HIM SO!
THANK YOU, DR. MELNIKOFF! AND IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'LL CONSIDER THIS A TRIUMPH OF MEDICINE OVER IDEOLOGY!
LOVELY PETROVNA, WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL SHE IS IN GOOD HANDS, BERCHEFF!

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE IN CHARGE OF THE BALANCE OF GOOD AND EVIL IN NATURE! WELL, LOOK, JACK, YOU'VE DONE A CRUMMY JOB!!
GIVE ME A SHOT AT IT! I'LL CLEAN THINGS UP! THEN, AND ONLY THEN, WILL I REST EASY!
HEY! MY HANDS ARE DISSOLVING, RAAAMA! CUT IT OUT!
HUH? THEY'RE OKAY NOW! WHAT'S GOIN' ON?
COME FORWARD, BOSTON BRAND!
YOUR PROTESTATIONS RING WITH THE TRUTH!
YOU, DEADMAN, SHALL GO FORTH AND ROOT OUT THOSE POCKETS OF INFAMY UNTIL YOUR SOUL AND MY JUDGMENT RECOGNIZE THE BALANCE ONCE AGAIN!
15

OKAY, RAMA, I COULDN'T MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR SECRETARY SO I BARGED RIGHT IN! 'SCUSE IT!
ALBEIT IS YOUR CALLING, DEADMAN. SO BE IT! I SHALL GRANT YOU WILL NOT BE HAPPY IN NANDA PARBAT! THEREFORE YOU WILL COME TO ME FOR YOUR FINAL REST!
THOSE EYES... BEAMING TOWARD ME...

AND I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO LET ME STICK AROUND I'M TELLING YOU... NO... DEMANDING YOU LET ME STAY!
IN CASE YOU FORGOT, I NEVER ASKED TO STAY AROUND TO FIND MY KILLER!
SELFISH DEADMAN! AFTER ALL YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN...
I NEVER ASKED TO BE SHOWN HOW LOUSED UP THIS WORLD IS... HOW FULL OF KILLERS, THIEVES, CON MEN, DRUG ADDICTS AND ASSASSINS! BUT YOU SHOWED IT TO ME! I ASKED FOR NOTHING!
MONKEY SPIT! WAS WHAT HAPPENED TO NOOK PART OF YOUR GIFT TO ME? A GIFT OF FUTILITY!!

SAME CONDITIONS AS BEFORE?
SAME CONDITIONS! BUT AS YOU NOW KNOW, NOT ALL HUMANS ARE VULNERABLE TO YOUR CONTROL!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO REMIND ME!
YOU ALSO HAVE WEAKNESSES WHICH UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES... NO, I CAN SAY NO MORE!...
THANKS! I NEEDED MORE PROBLEMS!

Arlen: *Arnold Drake scripted the first Deadman story, and editor Jack Miller wrote some of the follow-on issues, but then the writing history becomes fuzzy.*

Neal: Drake was doing some other stuff, so Miller started to write Deadman, which got Drake upset, so he wrote a story which was rejected as being too far away from his original concept. Miller's writing was quite good and more soap opera-like.

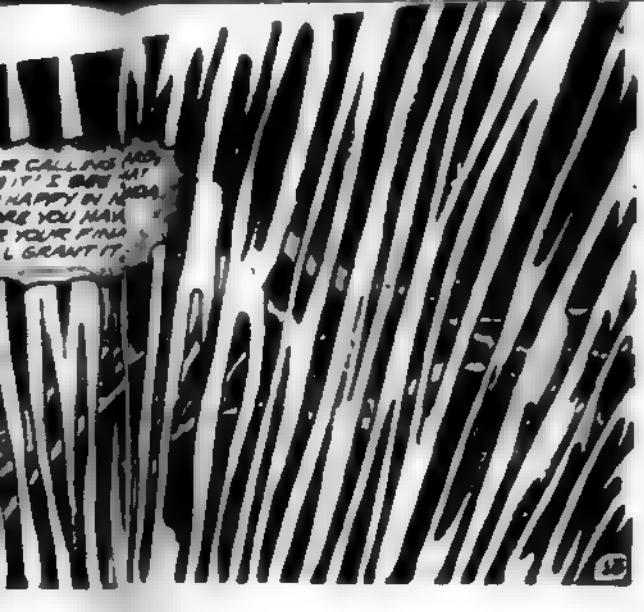
Then suddenly Deadman got all the attention in the world and everybody wanted to write a Deadman story. People like Bob Kanigher were handing in scripts that took Deadman in random directions. Then Miller was let go for reasons unknown, something on the "editor" level.

At that point, I talked to (incoming editor) Dick Giordano and asked if I could submit stories, because each time someone submitted Deadman stories, the character seemed different, and I was afraid the series would get lost right at the beginning. Dick said fine, and from that point on, I was writing Deadman, and the series became more consistent.

I was able to experiment more since I could design the overall story from scratch. I began placing more significance on Rama Kushna. Because Deadman was always up front ranting, her development went forward unnoticed.

Arlen: *The series was abruptly canceled in late 1968, just as we were beginning to learn about Rama Kushna and the Shangbai La-like land of Nanda Parbat. And all subsequent versions of Deadman by others never followed up on what you had started.*

Neal: No one picked up the pieces I left in plain sight. Rama Kushna was meddling with human affairs quite a bit for a god... if she was a god. What was her real goal? And why did Deadman become solid when he went to Nanda Parbat? Why was the Sensei



able to detect him and ward him off? Is death just another plane of existence? Was Deadman truly a dead man?

Arlen: *Your final issue of Deadman (*Strange Adventures *#216, February 1969) featured some of your most psychedelic artwork, including the odd "HEY, A JIM STERANKO EFFECT" panel. What did you think of Steranko's work?*

Neal: What Jim Steranko did at the time had almost no relationship to what I did. We weren't in competition. We weren't trying to do the same thing.

He was definitely a graphic illustrator. His goal was to create new and impactful images graphically. Steranko was looking to punch you in the face. That came from Kirby.

I was coming from a more traditional background and direction. I tended to do a better drawing. He decried realism except where it related to graphics. Graphics were not my only focus. They weren't his only focus either, but they were certainly overpowering. I was doing many other things, level after level. I was thrilled with the page, thrilled with the opportunity to experiment, as was Steranko. He was, in some ways, much more aggressive.

He was also very aware of the modern world. His work says, in effect, "Wake up everybody! Don't you know we're here?" When I did the Steranko effect panel in Deadman, I was tipping my hat to him. I never felt in any way competitive. I felt we were a community. Like Steranko, I was somebody with a reasonable knowledge of things that were common outside of comic books suddenly stepping into the field and BAM!, slapping everybody in the face.

THAT GUY DARKDEVIL OUGHTTA TAKE SOME LESSONS FROM ME!
NEED SOMETHIN' NOW TA GET THRU THE ROOF! AND AN ACID PELLET SHOULD DO THE JOB JUST RIGHT!
OKAY, FURY... SECOND IN INFO!
HEY! AM I NUTS OR ARE THOSE STAIRS UPSIDE DOWN?
NOT THAT IT MAKES ANY DIFFERENCE, 'CAUSE I'M GOIN' UP THERE NO MATTER WHAT!
MEBBE I CAN TAKE A SHORT CUT THRU THIS JOINT!
GRAPPLIN' HOOK... DON'T FAIL ME NOW!
SO, OKAY! I GOT A COUPLA MORE POINTS ON MY "SCORE-CARD" SO THAT AND A DIME'LL BUY ME COFFEE!
I'M MOTHIN' IF I CAN'T MAKE IT THROUGH WHATEVER'S AHEAD!
THE NEXT BREATH I TAKE COULD GET ME A BELLYFUL OF POISON GAS!
WHATEV' LOOKS LIKE SOMETHIN OUT OF AN OLD BATTLA LIKE OUR ATTICK!
THE BALLS MUST BE RIGGED TA EXPLODE WHEN THEY'RE NEARLY TOUCHING THE FLOOR!
NO PROBLEM FER ME TA SWITCH ON THE MAGNETIC COILS IN MY BOOTS!
JUST WATCH YER STEP, FURY!
THE NEXT DOOR I OPEN COULD GET ME BLOWN FROM HERE TO KINGDOM COME!
I GOTTA MAKE IT ALL THE WAY... OR DIE TRYIN'!

BBBZZZZZZZ
HUH? UH... OH, YEAH. OKAY, VAL. TELL THE GARAGE TA GET MY CAR WARMED UP!
SORRY, NICK! YOUR NEW BERLINETTA'S HAVING AN ARSENAL INSTALLED! USE MY KIKE! AND IF YOU'RE NOT TOO BUSY, DROP THE CAR OFF AT MY PLACE LATER! LOVE AND KISSES, BOSS MAN!

Adams vs. Steranko?

A. Adams art from Strange Adventures #216

Steranko full page from Strange Tales #166, Mar. 68, single panel with woman's face on screen from Strange Tales #168, May 68

"When I came into comic books, they were in the dark ages."

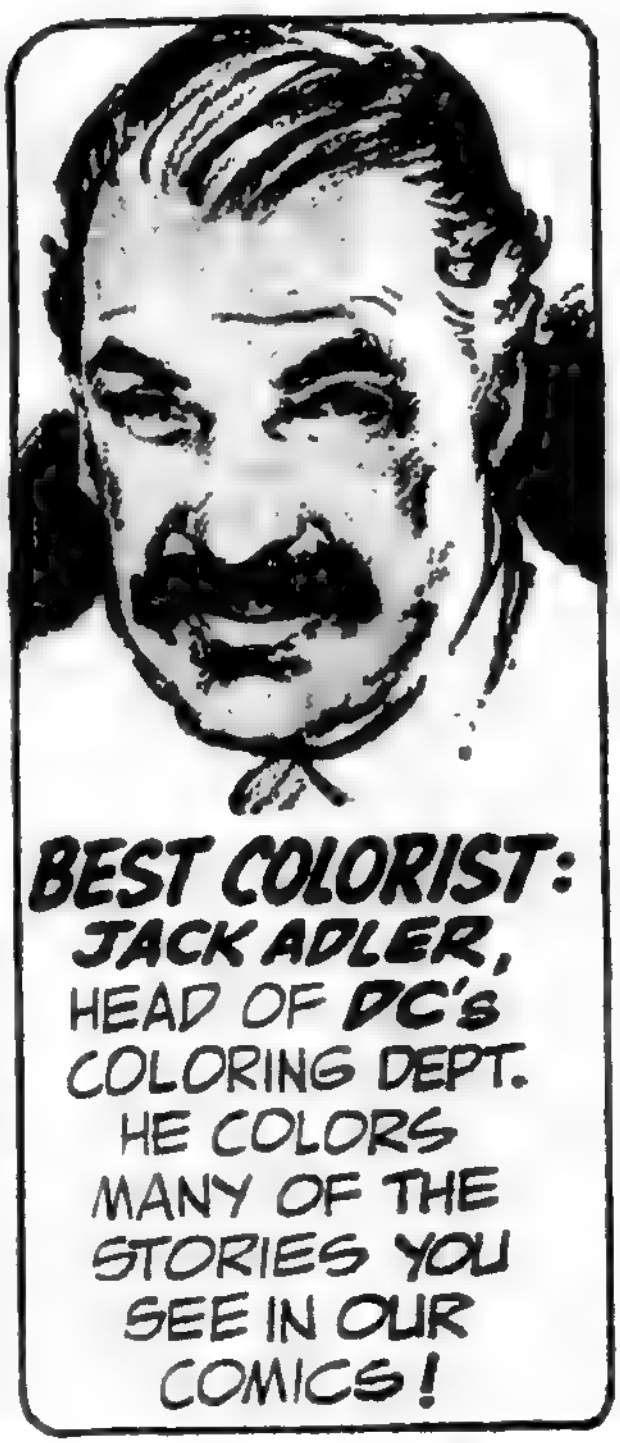
When I came into comic books, they were in the dark ages. They knew nothing. I lived in the real world, but suddenly I walked into this place where the door was closed. Well, through that door was a Neanderthal business. The people in charge were editors who had no real artistic sense. They just knew that artists came in and handed in pages, and you printed the pages as long as the story made sense.

I would go into the production room with my pages and they would have the production guys color 'em. It was my experience that they had little or no talent, and certainly no training. They seemed to be an uneducated coloring group doing the job of coloring. In those days, you could open up a DC comic book and not tell if a scene took place at day or night! You can almost understand why some artists didn't aspire to do a better job when the quality of the color was so bad. And it would go on forever, the same kind of dullness, unchallenged. How do you stop that? How do you imply that coloring was important? You couldn't.

Arlen: *So how did you?*

Neal: I made friends with the best colorist there—Jack Adler. He cared more than most production guys. He showed me how they did their colors, and I was fascinated. We were able to talk about color separations and halftone dots because I knew about them from the advertising business. And we would talk over color theory, about how to take advantage of the limited palette that was available.

We'd color other colorist's stuff. A certain job could come through poorly colored, I'd convince Jack to give me the extra stats: I'd recolor it, and we'd hand in the pages that I colored. The original colorist was paid, but rarely compared his coloring to the finished book. Then Jack started to do the same thing, as his own coloring got better. DC didn't know what was going on, but somehow the books were looking better.



Arlen: *How did you achieve the range and richness in your coloring that gave your work the appearance of being hand colored, not mechanically screen separated?*

Neal: First off, I simply increased the range of coloring to its potential. At first I was told by Sol Harrison that if too much color was printed, the colors would tend to slip as they sat on one another and bind the machine.

"But Sol," I said, "this isn't the New York Times Magazine where the colors sit on top of good paper, we're printing on toilet paper here." Moisture from the color gets absorbed immediately through newsprint. So Sol gave me permission to put some heavier colors in. Suddenly my stories were showing up with more different colors than anybody else had.

But I hadn't solved the real problem. Marvel Comics had twice as many colors as DC, 64 as opposed to 32, simply because they had two additional yellow tones, 50% and 25%. Sol told me Marvel was paying extra to get tone yellow. That didn't make any sense to me. So I "suggested" to Carmine and editors like Joe Orlando that they ask Jack Liebowitz, the owner of DC Comics, why Marvel was getting twice as many colors as DC.

The next day, Jack Liebowitz storms into Harrison's office, yelling, "What the hell is this? Marvel's getting twice as many colors as we're getting?"

"But they're paying more for it," Sol answered.

Jack Adler portrait by Adams for house ad, "DC Sweeps A C B A. Awards" running in November '71 issues

NEAL ADAMS

COLORS & COVERS

Note the incredible detail and the effect "brass action" that Adams used on the cover of House of Mystery #177 (Nov/Dec 1968).

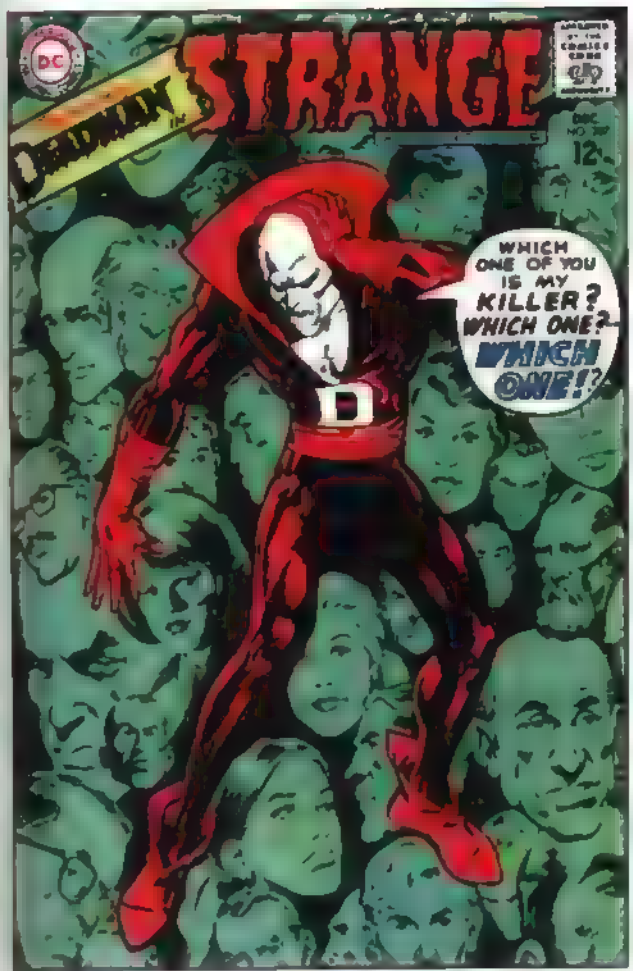
© 1996 DC

DC Special #6
Jan/Mar 1970

Tomahawk
#116 May/Jun
1968

Strange
Adventures
#217 Mar/Apr
1969

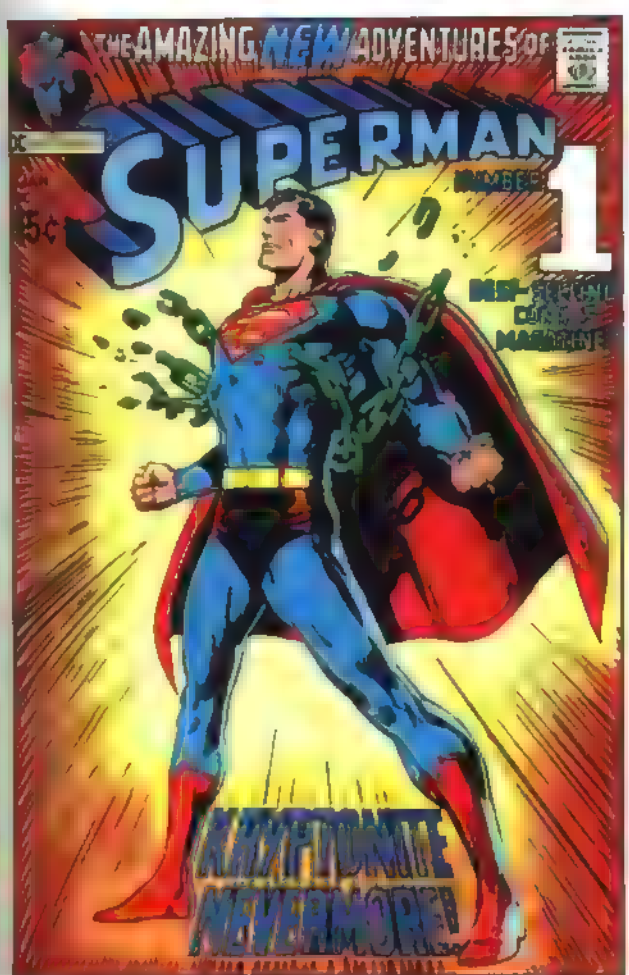
Strange
Adventures
#213 Jul/Aug
1968



Strange Adventures #207 Dec 1967

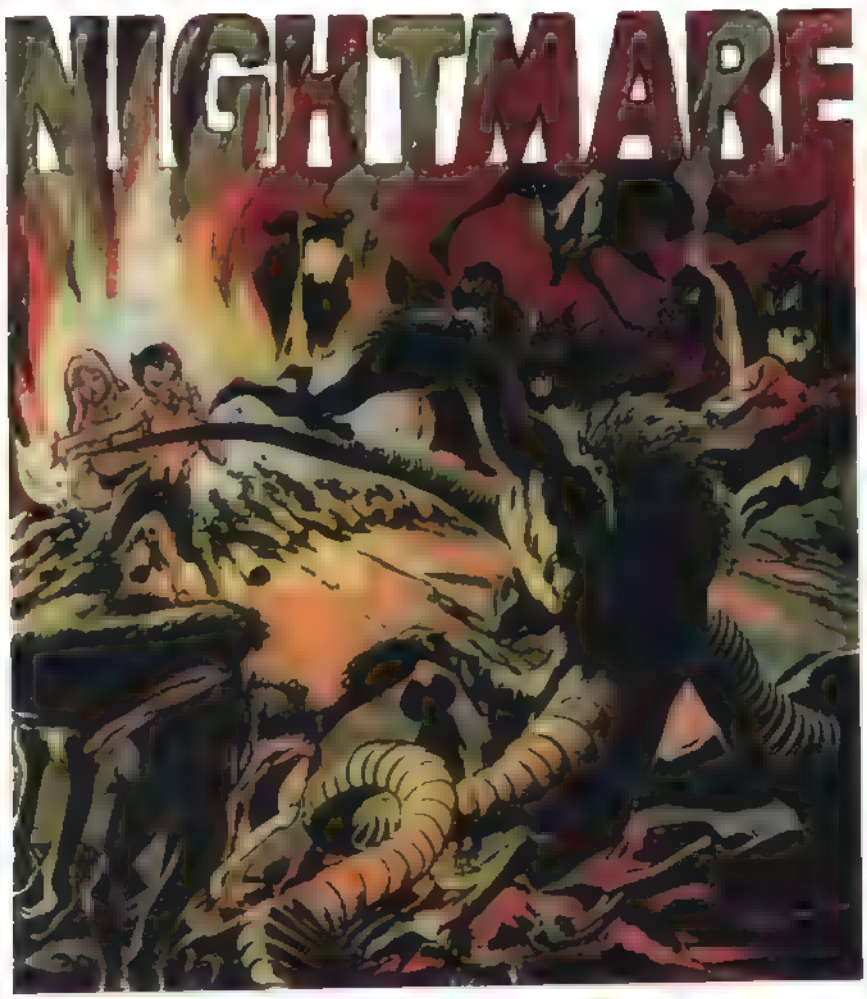
AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE HONORABLE JOHN V. LINDSAY, MAYOR OF NEW YORK CITY
GREEN LANTERN
CO-STARRING
GREEN ARROW
ONLY 25¢
MORE DEADLY THAN THE ATOM BOMB!
WINNER of ACADEMY AWARD for BEST COMIC!

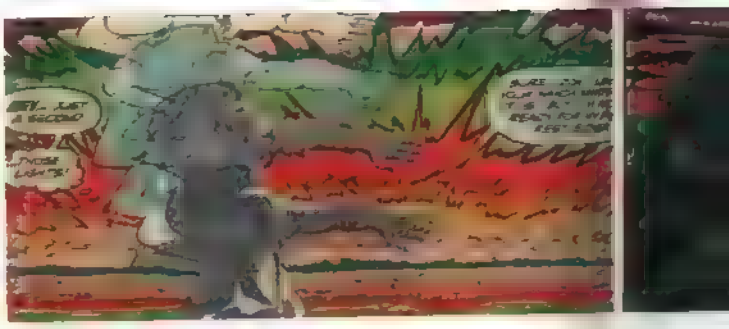
Green Lantern #86 Oct/Nov 1971

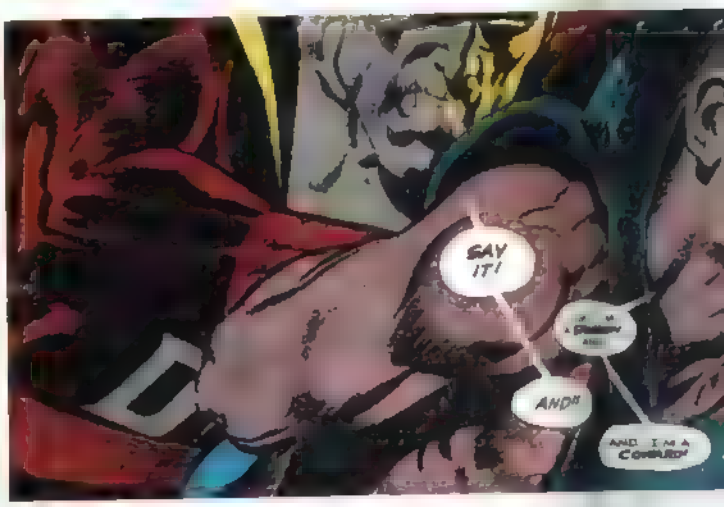


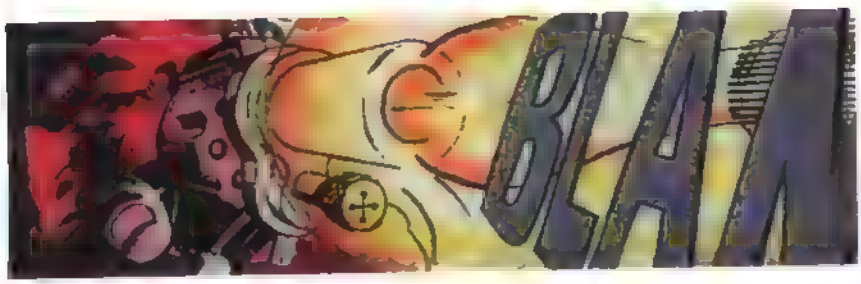
Superman #233 Jan 1971

DC Special #4 Jul/Sep 1969









"People don't know good coloring from they like something. And good colorin

You think that cheap blankity-blank over there is paying more for his bleeping comic books than I am?" Liebowitz told Sol to call the color separator who separated both Marvel and DC. The separator says, "You want tone yellow? You got it." They were, of course, charging Marvel the same prices, which means that from 1961 to 1967, DC had been printing with only half the colors available to them. But on that very day, DC Comics had twice as many colors as they had the day before.

Arlen: *One of the stylistic effects you shared with Steranko was the use of zipatone shading film.*

Neal: I thought of zipatone as simply another color, not as an "effect". If I wanted a graduated gray, how would I possibly get that in comic book color? I'd do it with zipatone. If I wanted to throw a shadow over an area and do it evenly to alter the color, I'd do it with zipatone. It surprised people, I suppose.

None of it was a surprise to me. Zipatone was available to everybody. Even one of the artists in those days could have done this stuff, if they had studied.

Arlen: *In mid-'68 you debut a long string of incredible covers for Joe Orlando's DC mystery books.*

Neal: Carmine hired Joe as an editor and gave him the mystery books, basically stories that had been lying around on the shelf. Joe came to me and said, "I need somebody to do covers for me that will bring some attention to the books." So I pumped a kind of pseudo-Norman Rockwell quality into them, little kids being scared by things that were nothing like what DC had on its covers.

I liked the idea that I could depart from the superhero zone and play with

g from bad coloring, but they know when
oloring does make you like something."

lighting and shadows and coloring. I've always been a fan of Toulouse-Lautrec because he used colors in ways that most people haven't, but unlike Lautrec I made an effort to create a sense of three-dimensionality with the color.

Suddenly everybody was buying these books because of the covers.

Arlen: *You also did 19 Phantom Stranger covers in a row.*

Neal: I guess I fell for the mystery thing.

Arlen: *Between those covers, all the Superman family covers you were doing, and various other titles like Tomahawk, it seemed like you were the de facto house artist for DC Comics.*

Neal: They never thought of me that way. To tell the truth, they felt Marvel comics crawling up their back. They knew they needed something new going on. I was the only new thing around, and they spread me as far as they could.

Arlen: *But were you willing to be spread?*

Neal: It was fine with me. When you work with people and they make requests of you, you can't, in the middle of saying yes five times, suddenly say no. The editors were constantly on me, "You've got to do this cover! I really need to get this cover done!" Truthfully, it seemed I was needed. But you can hear that conversation an awful lot before you start to think, maybe you're doing too many covers.

Facing page, [illegible] Justice #1, [illegible] page from House of Mystery #[illegible]; Strange Adventures #[illegible], page [illegible]; Strange Adventures #[illegible], page [illegible]; Brave & Bold #[illegible], page [illegible]; Brave & Bold #[illegible], page [illegible]; The page to the [illegible] Strange Adventures #[illegible], page [illegible]; House of Mystery #[illegible], page [illegible]; and Green Lantern #[illegible], page [illegible].

House of Mystery #189 Nov/Dec 1970

Unexpected #110 Dec/Jan 1968/69

House of Secrets #88 Oct/Nov 1970

Witching Hour! #13 Feb/Mar 1971

Showcase #80
Feb 1969

Phantom Stranger #13
May/Jun 1971

Phantom Stranger #10
Nov/Dec 1970

Phantom Stranger #17
Jan/Feb 1972

Detective Comics
BATMAN and ROBIN
COMMISSIONER GOR DON!
BAT MAN
Detective Comics
BATMAN
GHOST of the KILLER SKIES' ENEMY ACE
BATMAN
DC 100 PAGE SUPER SPECTACULAR
DC
20
BAT MAN
HAHAHA
Detective COMICS
NIGHT
Detective Comics
BATMAN
ROBIN BATGIRL
DC
20
BAT MAN
BATMAN
ROBIN
DIES!
Detective Comics
BATMAN
ROBIN
BAT MAN
Detective Comics
BATMAN

"DC had this problem with Batman..."

DC had this problem with Batman. The stupid television show was doing great, but the comic books weren't selling.

People were ghosting for Bob Kane and Batman wasn't getting any better. Even Carmine's version didn't make it for me. I never really liked Batman after Jerry Robinson and Dick Sprang left.

But I felt part of my job was to help DC Comics, so I went to Julie Schwartz and said I'd like to do a Batman story. He basically kicked me out of his office. Julie probably had reasons for saying no, maybe they had to do with Kane's contractual obligations with DC.

So I talked to Murray Boltinoff, who edited *Brave and Bold*, which had a Batman team-up in every issue. I had done Jerry Lewis for him and he received the kudos from DC, so he was ready for me to do anything. "Let's team Batman up with Deadman," I said, 'cause I was already doing Deadman.

BATMAN
HOT-LINE CALL BATMAN! LET'S GET GOING!
NOT TONIGHT, KID! I'M STAYING IN THE BATCAVE TO WATCH MYSELF ON TELEVISION!
THE ADVENTURES OF BAT-MAN
IS TELEVISION UP TO ITS GREATEST CHALLENGE?
By Eric F. Goldman
TV GUIDE
POP CORN
POW!

Arlen: *You had dabbled with the Batman earlier in '68, on a couple of* World's Finest *covers and in a few stories, but they didn't seem to be on the same artistic level as Deadman.*

Neal: I was showing the editors I could do the covers, but there was an insistence that I then do the stories. And I was

reluctant, because I had no interest in doing Batman at that time. You can tell from looking at him that I wasn't focused. When Batman appears he looks like Superman in a pretty ugly costume.

Arlen: *Yet soon after, when you began drawing Batman full-time in* Brave and Bold, *you return him to his original creature-of-the-night persona right from the start.*

Neal: I got to like Batman. As I went along, one of the first things that occurred to me was Batman was supposed to look like a bat. I had bat photographs in my reference file and I loved the way bats flew. I loved the way birds flew. There was something inspirational about the way they flew that it was clear to me that this was part of what Batman was about.

Batman cover by Infantino, Joe Giella 1966. TV Guide cover from '66. World's Finest cover by Adams '68.

I used to haunt 42nd Street when the new Hammer films were playing, with Christopher Lee as Dracula. There was one scene I remember that just threw me. The camera was above a balcony, looking down on Lee as a coach leaves from the gate. Lee's wearing this long cape, and as the coach leaves, he turns. But before he turns, he makes this subtle move, and the cape catches the wind, swirls around and follows him as he goes off screen. I thought, that's the way Batman's cape ought to move. It should become this living thing. And so that's what I did immediately.

Months later, Julie Schwartz comes down the hall at me with letters from kids saying the only Batman at DC Comics is in Brave and Bold, and asks me what makes me think I know how Batman ought to look? I said, "Julie, it's not just me that knows what Batman ought to be, it's me and every kid in America. The only people that don't know what Batman ought to be are the people here at DC Comics."

(Left pg, top: Batman sketch circa '72. Printed in '73 NY Comicon program book. Bottom: Cover art to Batman #240, inked by Bernie Wrightson. Rt pg, 1st panel: From Brave & Bold #84, Jun '69. Top rt: From Detective #404, October '70, inked by Dick Giordano. Rt bottom: From Brave & Bold #93, Jan '71.)

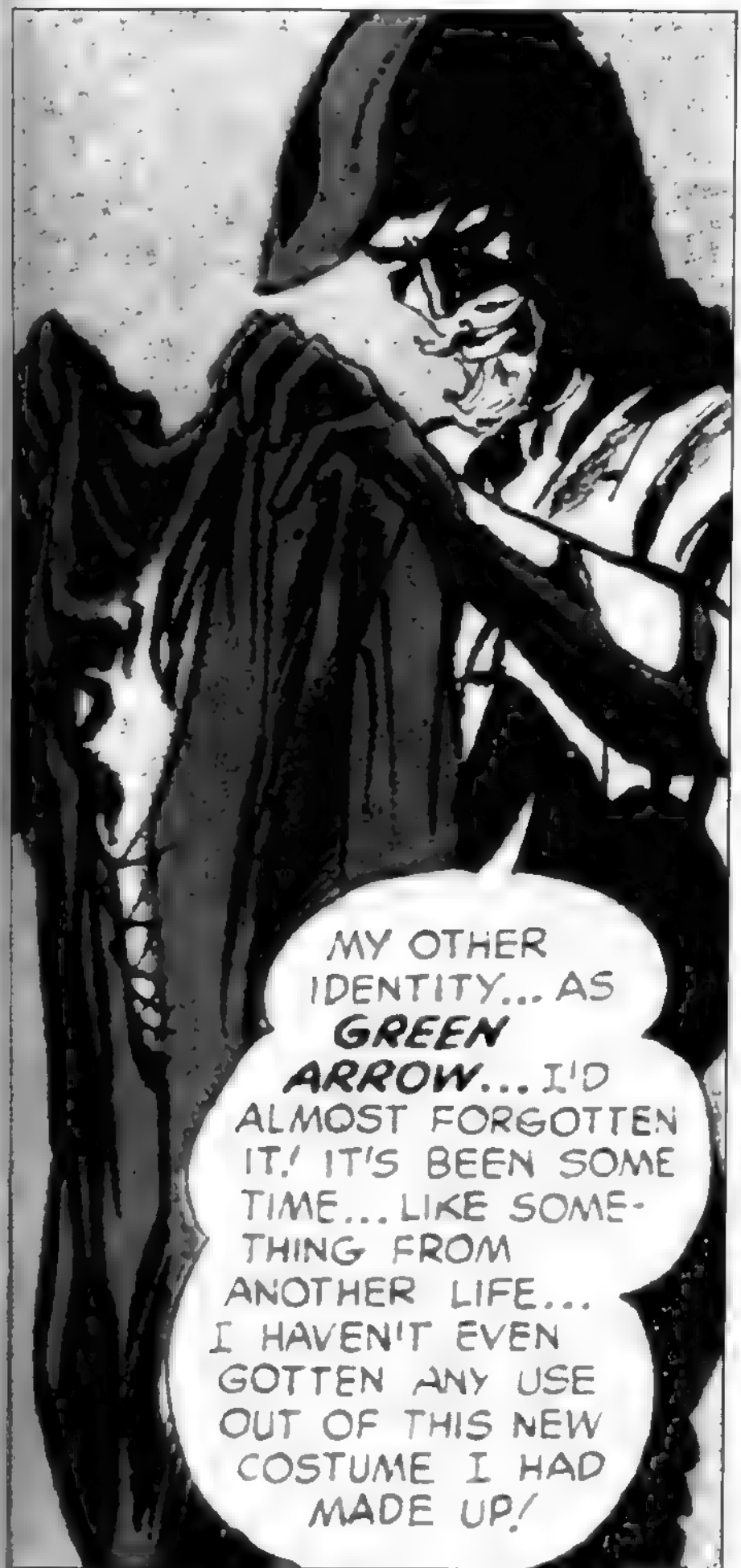
ZING
SWIP
SWING
AIEEE! EL HOMBRE MURCIELAGO!*
THE BATMAN!

BATMAN
FLASH
IN BUT
BORK
CAN
HURT
YOU!

YOU CAN'T
HIDE FROM
DEADMAN!
THEN...

SGT.
ROCK
A GERMAN ACCENT IN WHITE? IT FIGURES. AS HE SHOWS UP DON'T IT MAY HAVE T BECAUSE THE REAL ARCHANGEL LOOKS STILL A FRANCE
FAKE!
HMMMM, DID YOU HEAR A NOISE BACK THERE?

HAHAHA
HAHAHAHAHA
CRIMPER!


MY OTHER IDENTITY... AS GREEN ARROW... I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN IT! IT'S BEEN SOME TIME... LIKE SOMETHING FROM ANOTHER LIFE... I HAVEN'T EVEN GOTTEN ANY USE OUT OF THIS NEW COSTUME I HAD MADE UP!

Arlen: *The eight issues of* Brave & Bold *you drew are as memorable for the great stories by Bob Haney as they are for your art*

Neal: Bob Haney wrote a lot of good stories. But he tended to write too much for a story, and you get lost in the details. I tended to focus his stories and make them more direct. People remember the Bob Haney *Brave & Bolds*. They all had great beginnings and great endings. They had drama in the middle. They had flesh and meat and potatoes. They were all strong.

Arlen: *Your recreation of Green Arrow in* Brave & Bold *was startling–the first superhero with facial hair, making him very much of his time*

Neal: When Green Arrow was offered as a co-star with Batman in *B&B*, Murray Boltinoff did it with a little embarrassment. I had one question: could I give him a new costume? Murray said sure, and had Haney write it into the script.

When I was a kid, I loved Green Arrow, but he had two major faults. Jack Kirby fixed one of them in a two-part story (the only one he did), in which he refocused on GA's incredible arrows. The second fault was his… look.

In my mind, GA was a modern-day Robin Hood–like, duh–so that's what I made him into. Leather jerkin, Robin's hat, Al Williamson boots, and a neat beard. To make him different from traditional Robin Hoods, I made him blonde.

Arlen: *Following the fan reaction to Batman in* Brave &

Lft page, top left: Splash page from B&B #81, Jan '69, inked by Vince Colletta & Adams. "Adams: But Bork can hurt you." was not the original title. Haney wrote this great line in the story that goes, "You can't hurt Bork, but Bork can hurt you." And I thought what a great line. So I went to Murray Boltinoff and said, I'd really like to use it as the title. He let me do it because, basically, he was letting me do an awful lot of stuff he might not have otherwise allowed. It was somebody else. What's amazing about that issue is how many people remember that issue." Top right: Splash from B&B #80, Nov '69. Bottom lft: Splash from B&B #84, Jul '69. Bottom right: Full page from B&B #80, Oct '68, inked by Giordano. Rt page, lft panel: From B&B #85, Sep '69. Rt top & bottom: early sketches of Green Arrow originally published in Comics Interview #91, '91.

"I really like Batman...

Bold. *Schwartz teams you up with writer Denny O'Neil in late '69 to begin a 4-year run of solo Batman stories. During this run, you got to do your takes on classic foes - Two-Face and the Joker, and new foes, Ra's Al Ghul, and Man-Bat, that have become classics.*

Neal: It was my intention to reinvent Batman and bring back all the good stuff, so if I only got one shot at doing the old villains, I would try to do definitive versions. I pulled out the stops. I did things with the Joker, for example, that I always had in my mind, like putting him in a shark's mouth.

Denny O'Neil and Frank Robbins helped me add to the legend. Denny originally wrote Ra's Al Ghul as a regular guy. I went through nip-ups trying to create a visual of this non-costumed guy. But in the end I "found" him.

As for Man-Bat, the door was opened and I ushered him in.

Arlen: *What do you mean? How was Man-Bat created?*

Neal: It was a sunny day and Frank Robbins had gone through his three plots and Julie rejected them all. Which Julie had a tendency to do. Robbins didn't want to leave without having a story nailed down, but Julie was a very patient editor, so they just sat there in the same position for an hour, grunting ideas back and forth.

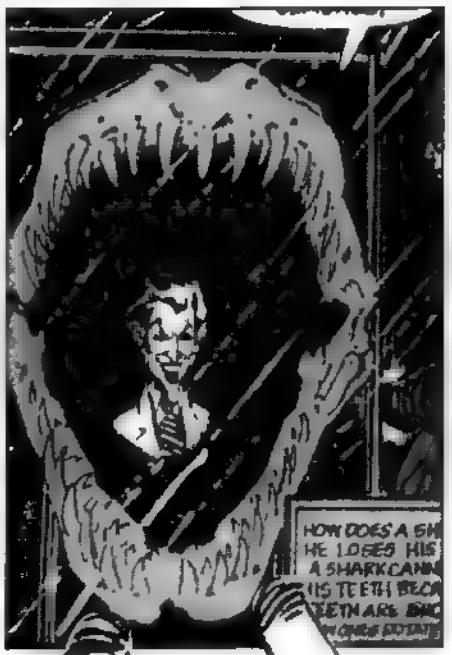
Julie turned to me in the middle of this and said, "Hey, Adams, got any ideas?" So, I said, "Yeah, I have a great idea." He said, "Nah, you're kidding." I said, "Okay, forget it." Then

Large Batman bust from Batman #245, Oct. '72. Facing page: Top, left to right: Two-Face head from Batman #244, Aug. '71, inked by Giordano; Joker head splash page from Batman #251, Sept. '73; Ra's Al Ghul head from Batman #244, Sept. '72, inked by Giordano. Center: Actual size thumbnail sketch of Two-Face head. Panel from Batman #251. Actual size thumbnail sketch of Ra's Al Ghul from cover of Batman #232, Jun. '71. Bottom: The first idea for Man-Bat, published in Theakston's Neal Adams Treasury #2, '79. Man-Bat head from Detective #407, Jan. '71, inked by Giordano. First Man-Bat cover, 1970.

...he became my character."

THE COIN HAS DECIDED! THE GOOD PART OF MY NATURE WINS... AND SO TWO-FACE MUST STRIKE!

HA-HA
HA-HA
HA-HA
HA-HA
HA-HA
HA-HA
HA-HA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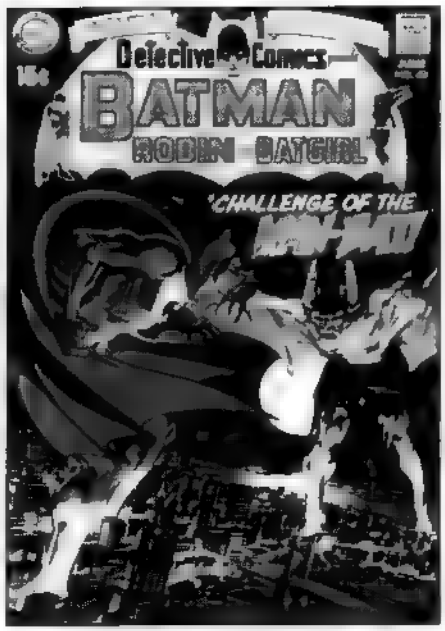
MAN


Detective Comics
BATMAN
ROBIN BATGIRL
CHALLENGE OF THE

Portrait of Giordano by Adams from '70 Comic Art Convention awards house ad. Bottom: Panel from Brave & Bold #93, Jan. '71

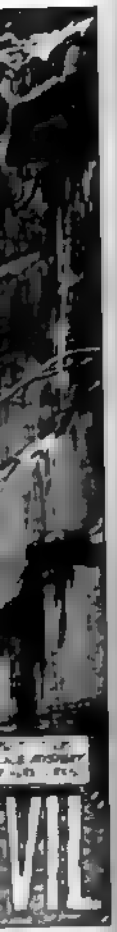
Facing page, top: Splash page from Batman #234 inked by Giordano. Bottom: Full page from Batman #255, Apr. '74, also inked by Giordano

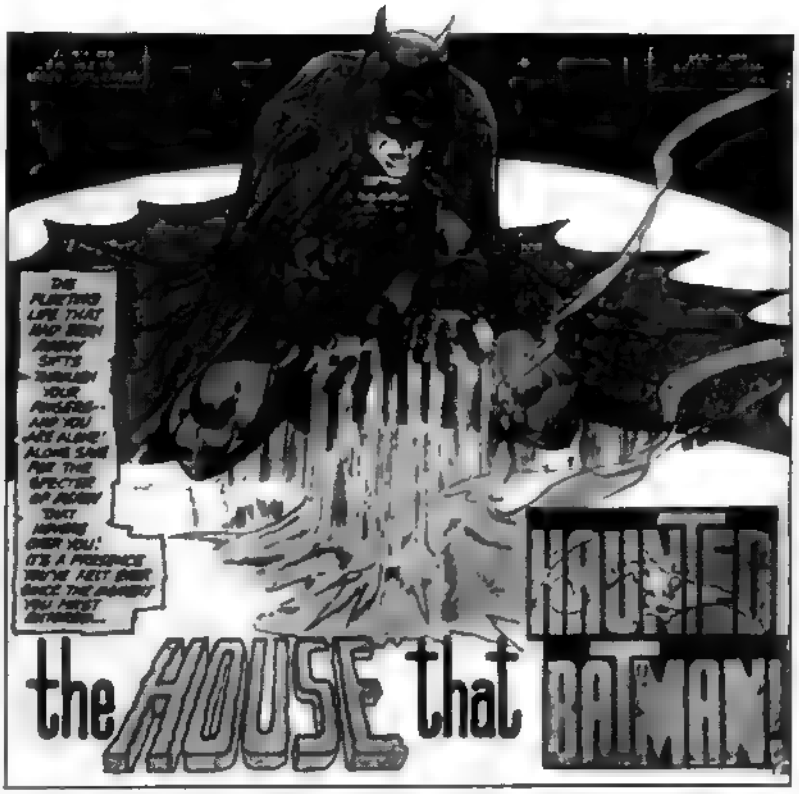
Frank said, "No, what is it?" I said, "Are you going to listen to the idea or are you going to hock me?" They grudgingly listened.

"There's this scientist who's a big fan of Batman. So big that he's dedicated his work to coming up with an extract from bats that can make Batman a real bat-man, by taking on the abilities of a bat. Through a bizarre circumstance he takes the serum himself and turns into a man-bat!" Doesn't sound like a big deal now, but it was new then. If you think about it, it's such an obvious idea, you'd be insane not to do it.

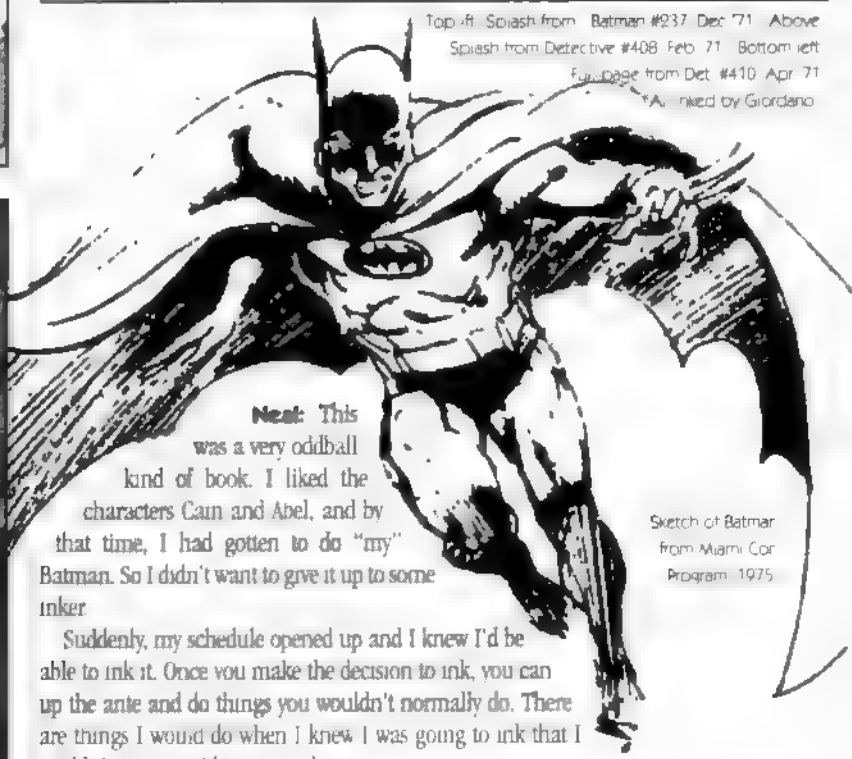
But Julie says, "You're kidding," I said, "Julie, how is DC going to feel if Marvel comes up with a man-bat and gets away with it? Because they can!" So Julie says, "Will you draw it?" Robbins ended up writing it, and that is the origin of Man-Bat.

Arlen: *One of your best collaborations with O'Neil was 'Red Water Crimson Death' the 'team up' with The House of Mystery in* Brave and Bold *#93, January 1971 partly because it was one of the few Batman stories you inked yourself.*





Top left: Splash from Batman #237, Dec '71. Above: Splash from Detective #408, Feb '71. Bottom left: Full page from Det. #410, Apr '71. *All inked by Giordano.



Sketch of Batman from Miami Con Program, 1975.

Neal: This was a very oddball kind of book. I liked the characters Cain and Abel, and by that time, I had gotten to do "my" Batman. So I didn't want to give it up to some inker.

Suddenly, my schedule opened up and I knew I'd be able to ink it. Once you make the decision to ink, you can up the ante and do things you wouldn't normally do. There are things I would do when I knew I was going to ink that I couldn't chance with anyone else.

Arlen: *Did you choose who would ink you when you didn't ink yourself? Who did you like, who did you not like?*

Neal: I liked my inks when I took the time to do it right. I didn't really like other people inking my stuff. Hardly anybody had all the quality that I wanted. Somebody like Dick Giordano inked many things well, but he was always a little rushed. Tom Palmer did a complete job on my Marvel work, but tended to add lines on things like faces, so characters looked older than they were supposed to be. When you add lines, you tend to look at the lines. Yet both Dick and Tom had their own magic to add.

Arlen: *"The House that Haunted Batman" (Detective Comics #408, February 1971) was one of Len Wein's and Marv Wolfman's first published stories. This is about the time you're beginning to bring new talent into DC, like Bernie Wrightson, Mike Kaluta, and Howard Chaykin.*

"DC was going to can

Neal: I wasn't so much bringing them in as hiding them out. Just as quickly as DC opened the door to let me in, they attempted to close it after me. There was very little acceptance of anybody new.

So guys would come in and hang out in the room I was working in, otherwise they'd have to sit in the lobby. They didn't hide behind my desk, as legend has it. I was working on an artograph projector, and had to turn the room light off, so you had to look hard to make sure who was there, because the room was so dark. It was very casual, it wasn't like we were trying to "command raid" DC Comics, but being in that room was a big deal. It was a place to be so you could take the next step and see an editor.

Wein and Wolfman, were initially the most successful at getting in, I believe, via the letter pages. Then, when you get a story drawn by a professional who has achieved a little attention, suddenly you become professional too. Wrightson was the easiest because it was pretty recognizable that he was good enough. Chaykin was harder. Kaluta drifted. I don't know exactly how he got in.

I had become, by that time, like an advisor to the editors. They'd listen to me, but I'd have to jolly them along. Like, I got Rich Buckler in, but had to promise I'd ink his first job. It worked differently with each person. It was all for DC's own good, but they never quite recognized it that way. From their point of view, they didn't need anybody. From any logical person's point of view, they certainly did. Because otherwise everybody new was going to Marvel.

Arlen: *You drew in an office up at DC Comics everyday?*

Neal: I drew at home too, but mostly there, because they always wanted me to do covers. On a typical day, I'd artograph a cover, do layouts for more covers, and then I'd go home. When I got home I would work, maybe finish up a commercial job that night, then get up in the morning, drop off

Portrait of Denny O'Neil by Adams for Nov. 7, A.C.B.A. awards booklet ad.
Right page: Original cover illustration for Green Lantern/Green Arrow #76, April

cancel Green Lantern."

the job, head over to DC Comics around noon and do it all over again. I worked pretty hard. Every opportunity that I had, I took.

Arlen: *Like Green Lantern/Green Arrow?*

DC was going to cancel *Green Lantern*.

Gil Kane was off the book, so I asked Julie Schwartz if I could do the last couple of issues. All I wanted to do was draw Gil Kane's character and live up to his image of it. Julie told me I had too much to do, but I knew I could do it. And I wanted to do it. I had done so much with Batman that everybody's eyes were bugging out. So what was I going to do with Green Lantern?

Then Julie did a really smart thing. He got Denny O'Neil to write it. Denny came up with the theme that we really could play with and the ideas went crazy from there. Julie could depend on Denny coming up with good stories and me with good art, and everybody would talk about it. It became a very important series of comics.

Arlen: *Green Arrow's first appearance a year before in* Brave & Bold *barely hinted at the political consciousness he would develop in* GL/GA. *How did he make this transition into superhero spokesman of the Sixties generation?*

Neal: Robin Hood was the perfect anti-hero rebel fight-for-the-underdog hero model for the time. By making GA into a cool Robin Hood, I had served him up as an anti-establishment foil to counter Green Lantern's conforming, status quo-worshipping, white do-gooder, blind, kind of 1950's creep attitude. Social consciousness was the name of the particular game, then, and GA became the focus of that surge.

When I asked Bob Haney to write GA with cool arrows, he did, a little. When Denny wrote him, I also

YOU'RE NOT MAKING SENSE, GREEN ARROW!
NO? COME ON... I'LL GIVE YOU A GUIDED TOUR... A LOOK AT HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES--
--IF YOU CAN CALL IT LIVING!

Re. close-up panel of African American from GL/GA #76: "A lot of people think this was drawn from a photograph. I would crave for a photograph like that."

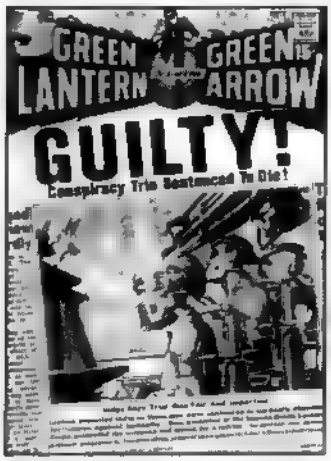
asked for cool arrows. He tried to use unique arrows when the opportunity arose, but it was a losing battle. GA had become the modern-day Robin Hood, and his political position was more important.

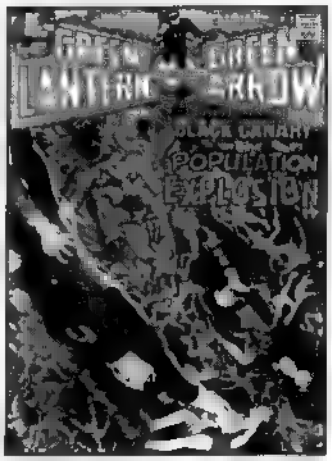
Small sacrifice that we lost the cool arrows.

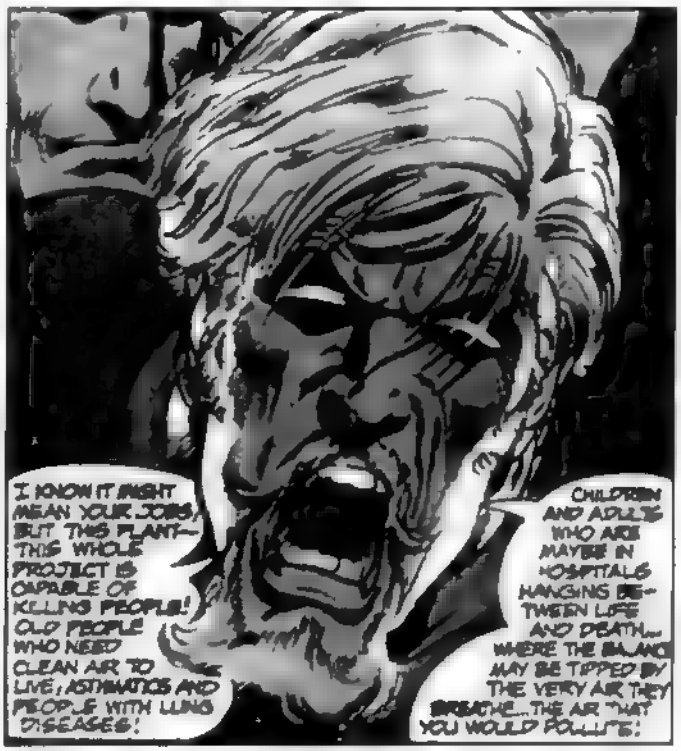
Arlen: *Denny O'Neil was able to write the stories he wrote knowing that you were going to draw them. In other words, he was able to write more realistic comic book stories than had been written, because you could draw more realistically than any other comic book artist.*

Neal: One of the things Denny always said, which I take to heart, was that I was easy to write for. Because the things that take a lot of energy to explain to other artists, I already knew, so that same energy could be put into the story. As a team, I took enough of the visual responsibility off his head to allow him to focus on his writing.

The stuff that was in these comic books was inside Denny. He was a product of the sixties when all those issues arose, and he felt very strongly about






I KNOW IT MIGHT MEAN YOUR JOBS, BUT THIS PLANT--THIS WHOLE PROJECT IS CAPABLE OF KILLING PEOPLE! OLD PEOPLE WHO NEED CLEAN AIR TO LIVE; ASTHMATICS AND PEOPLE WITH LUNG DISEASES!
CHILDREN AND ADULTS WHO ARE MAYBE IN HOSPITALS HANGING BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH... WHERE THE BALANCE MAY BE TIPPED BY THE VERY AIR THEY BREATHE...THE AIR THAT YOU WOULD POLLUTE!

Re: cover of GL/GA #81, Dec. '70: "I thought we started to run out of ideas when we ran the overpopulation story. That was a most my last issue. Politically I had a problem with the book. The American attitudes towards overpopulation were the reverse of sanity. Liberals felt the world was becoming overpopulated, so it was our responsibility to do something about it. Many of the liberal intellectual & socially-conscious young males got vasectomies, claiming they didn't want to bring more people into the world. Now, overpopulation is the world's #1 problem, and the solution isn't easy. It has little to do with rich Americans having babies and everything to do with people in India and Africa having 15 kids and not being able to feed them. Well-to-do Americans getting vasectomies isn't solving the problem. So the story's theme hit the wrong note with me. It was a liberal cause I could've done without."

them. He had some of that anger. I was available to take that and turn it into something that people hadn't seen before. I was like a director who had found a writer who had found his theme. Although Julie only consulted with me on general theme concepts, it wasn't until the end of the series that I made any real story contribution, and that was the drug issues.

DC Comics wanted to do a drug comic, so Denny and I spent some time at Phoenix House and places like that. I was also the chairman of my neighborhood drug rehabilitation center, making sure junkies weren't robbing people in the area. I got to see an awful lot of that close up. Denny and I separately presented concepts of comic books that DC might publish and give away for free. But the things we wanted to say about drug addiction were not the things DC wanted to say, like agreeing on the reasons for drug addiction. So DC decided not to do the project.

Still, Denny and I wanted to do something on drugs. But when I mentioned it, nobody at DC seemed interested because, of course, the Comics Code said we couldn't do it. I knew I wasn't going to get anywhere by trying to talk them into it, so I went home and drew what eventually became the cover of the first drug issue (*Green Lantern/Green Arrow* #85, September 1971).

Arlen: *Based on the built-in cliché of the name, "Speedy"?*

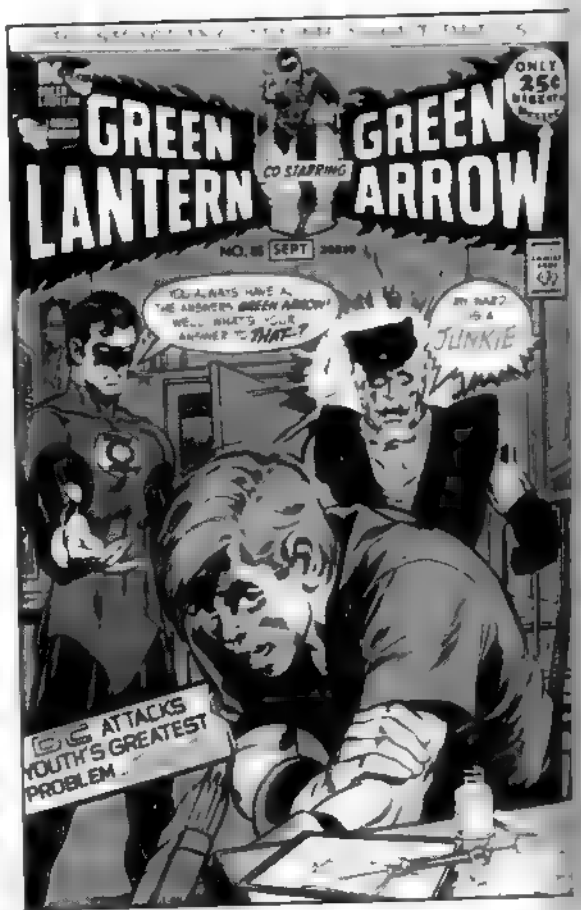
Neal: No, yet you'd think it would be. It seems so obvious, but it never occurred to me. I guess because he wasn't "speeding"… he was clearly on heroin.

So I put the cover on Julie Schwartz' desk and, of course, he picked it up and dropped it like a hot potato. "Why did you draw that?", he said. "You know we can't do it." I said, "Well, Julie, if you want to do it, we can do it." It was such an impossible cover that it wasn't even considered.

DC was owned by Kinney at the time, so I took it to one of their executives, a guy named Frank Herrara. He was very liberal and forward thinking, but he picked it up and dropped it like a hot potato, too. So the cover hung around for a couple of days.

Finally Stan Lee, over at Marvel Comics, decided he was going to print a Spider-Man story that was rejected by the Comics Code because a teenage boy had "popped pills and walked off a roof." In all my experience at the Phoenix Houses and various places I spoke of, nobody ever "popped pills and walked off a roof". Stan had been reading too much fiction.

Arlen: *About incidents like Art Linkletter's daughter jumping out the window on LSD?*


GREEN LANTERN
CO STARRING
GREEN ARROW
ONLY 25¢
NO. 85 SEPT
YOU ALWAYS HAVE AN ANSWER, GREEN ARROW! WELL... WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER TO THAT...?
MY DAD? HE'S A JUNKIE
DC ATTACKS YOUTH'S GREATEST PROBLEM...

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE HONORABLE JOHN V. LINDSAY, MAYOR OF NEW YORK CITY
ONLY 25¢
GREEN LANTERN
CO-STARRING
GREEN ARROW
MORE DEADLY THAN THE ATOM BOMB!
WINNER of ACADEMY AWARD for BEST COMIC!

Neal: Exactly. Lee used the right phrases, but I'm sure he didn't know what "pills" they were popping.

So DC hears about Stan's book going to press, and they're dying, beaten to the punch. And right on Julie Schwartz' desk is a really true drug cover, and they blew it. They called for a meeting of the Comics Code counsel, and within two weeks, the whole Code was re-written. It took a modern-day Robin Hood—and his ward's addiction—to fire the bolt that would destroy the Code as it was written.

The social relevance of the drug books, though significant, pales in significance compared to the fact that Green Arrow bought freedom back to comic books, for all of us.

Arlen: *The end of the two-part drug story had always been considered controversial because of a perceived conflict between you and O'Neil over how the story should've concluded.*

Neal: Really? Well, as you know, at the beginning of the story, Green Arrow sees Speedy shooting up, smacks him to the floor and yells at him to get out. Not what I call a caring person. Then we go through this whole 2-part story, Speedy dries out in massive pain, and at the end, there's a reconciliation. The script, as originally written, has Speedy basically telling GA he beat the habit by himself. GA says, "Good boy," and they walk off together.

I read this and thought, no… what had changed? Somebody had to learn something. GA had to learn some kind of lesson. He had to learn to respect this person that he had beat up at the beginning of the story. I felt the strongest possible climax was necessary, considering how we started the story. I made my feelings perfectly clear to Denny, that I thought his ending was anti-climactic, but he let me know, basically, it was fine as is.

Well, I thought it was important enough to bring it up to the editor, so I wrote two extra pages where Speedy punches GA back, lets him in on his pain, and then splits. GA, the father figure, knows

Re: Thumbnail sketches of pages 24 and 25 of GL/GA #86. Nov '71. printed actual size. "How many times have you heard artists complain that they did a sketch and then the finish, but lost the quality of the sketch? Problem solved. The whole idea of doing thumbnail sketches like this is to draw until the moment you feel it's there. It has to feel right. Then, if you blow them up, and trace the roll, you keep the quality of your sketch. Yet, see too many artists do sketches like diagrams and then try and enlarge them into drawings. I don't understand how they can do it. [illegible] down there in the thumbnail, it ain't going to be up there on the penciled page.

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU MISSED..
OKAY... I KNOW IT! LISTEN, WHITEY, THAT WINDBAG WANTS TO BE PRESIDENT! HE'S A RACIST..
...AND HE FIGURES ON CLIMBING TO THE WHITE HOUSE ON THE BACKS OF MY PEOPLE!

the kid's right and realizes that he (GA) was an ass. This ending made all the sense in the world to me. I brought the pages to Julie and said, "I honestly think this is how the story ought to end." He read them and said to go ahead and do it.

Arlen: *Without telling O'Neil?*

Neal: Of course he told Denny. But he's the editor; the editor makes the decision, that's how it works. For everyone!

Arlen: *After the drug issues, you go on to co-create the first American black superhero, the John Stewart Green Lantern.*

Neal: One day Julie said to me, "We're talking about doing a new Green Lantern." I said, "Who's it going to be?" Julie said, "Why do you care?"

Is he going to be white?" He knew I was laying a trap.

"Probably white...why?

"Well, Julie, what do you think of a black or oriental instead?"

"We could try that at some time, but not this time."

"Julie, let me explain it from this point of view. An alien comes to earth with this lantern, and gives it to the most worthy person on earth, a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant American airplane pilot. Then the aliens had to have a back-up Green Lantern, so they find the second most worthy man on earth, a white, blonde, American gym teacher. Well, that's kind of a stretch, considering the population of the planet. Now they're going to find another white guy for the third time? There aren't any Orientals or blacks in the world that are Lantern-worthy? We ought to have a black Green Lantern, not because we're liberals, but because it just makes sense." Julie grumbled, but he agreed.

But then the script came in, and I found the guy's name was Hannibal Lincoln, or Lincoln Washington, or something

like that. I thought how "comic book" of us. Why don't we give him a regular name? How about John Stewart? He's an architect who's out of work. That was a change I never heard Denny object to.

Arlen: *Why was* Green Lantern/Green Arrow *canceled?*

Neal: They canceled the book because it wasn't selling, and I can tell you why it wasn't selling.

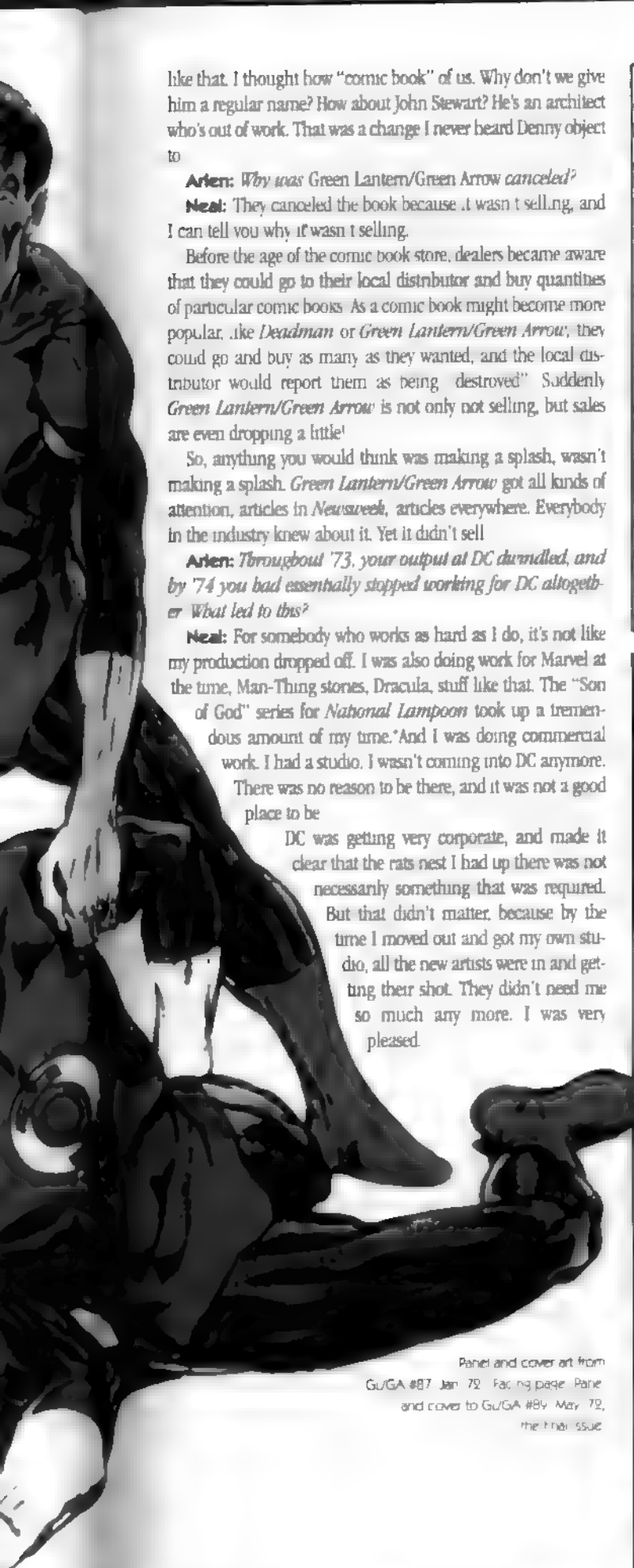
Before the age of the comic book store, dealers became aware that they could go to their local distributor and buy quantities of particular comic books. As a comic book might become more popular, like *Deadman* or *Green Lantern/Green Arrow*, they could go and buy as many as they wanted, and the local distributor would report them as being "destroyed." Suddenly *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* is not only not selling, but sales are even dropping a little!

So, anything you would think was making a splash, wasn't making a splash. *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* got all kinds of attention, articles in *Newsweek*, articles everywhere. Everybody in the industry knew about it. Yet it didn't sell.

Arlen: *Throughout '73, your output at DC dwindled, and by '74 you had essentially stopped working for DC altogether. What led to this?*

Neal: For somebody who works as hard as I do, it's not like my production dropped off. I was also doing work for Marvel at the time, Man-Thing stories, Dracula, stuff like that. The "Son of God" series for *National Lampoon* took up a tremendous amount of my time. And I was doing commercial work. I had a studio. I wasn't coming into DC anymore. There was no reason to be there, and it was not a good place to be.

DC was getting very corporate, and made it clear that the rats nest I had up there was not necessarily something that was required. But that didn't matter, because by the time I moved out and got my own studio, all the new artists were in and getting their shot. They didn't need me so much any more. I was very pleased.



Panel and cover art from GL/GA #87 Jan '72. Facing page: Panel and cover to GL/GA #89 May '72, the final issue.

"The changes I made at DC and Marvel Comics were not sufficient to satisfy me."

But Giordano wasn't happy being there because he and Carmine weren't getting along. Rather than be fired, Dick quit. So I asked him if he wanted to open a studio together, and that's when we began Continuity Associates.

Arlen: *In other words, Neal, you came, you saw, you conquered, and then you left.*

Neal: The changes that I had made at DC and Marvel Comics were not sufficient to satisfy me. I had come into a place that was in the depths of the dark ages. I moved forward everything I was capable of moving. Just look at my work and see how it became more sophisticated, more fun, much more readable. If you go through the last batch of comics I did, they were all, for the time, as proficient as it was possible to do. They were well drawn, well colored, but still printed on toilet paper, and we were still being paid the same rates. I had done everything I could, but the real changes we cared about weren't being made. We hadn't increased rates, we hadn't gotten into the concept of reprint royalties, we hadn't gotten into anything valid like supporting independent publishing. The changes that needed to be made in the comic book business had to be made from the outside.

We formed an organization, the Academy of Comic Book Arts, which began meeting at Continuity. It became a place where you

Facing page: Cover of The Art of Neal Adams Vol. #1 published by Sal Quartuccio in 1975.
Illustrated by Richard Corben.
Above, left panel by Kirby, Sinnott or Fargo.
Fantastic Four #102, February 1971.
Above, right panel from Batman #244, September 1972.
Bottom, from the '72 Detroit Triple Fan Convention program book.

could go and meet, rather than up in Marvel's office. We began to change the industry and had quite an effect. We started the idea of returning the original artwork. We supported independent publishers when they came along. We got a lot done without being aggressive or nasty.

And the comic book world did become much better. Better artists came in. We print on better paper, we get better money, there's royalties, there's reprints. Covers got better, there's more design, more concepts. We have people in art schools studying all kinds of techniques and applying them to comic books. The potential for freedom in comics, the potential for creating great artwork, may be greater than it's ever been.

So it was obviously the right decision to leave. I had to leave DC Comics for a period of time, start the Academy and get involved in other processes. The time had come for a change.

Arlen: *Though your drawing styles are on opposite ends of the spectrum, many feel your impact on the medium has been as great as Kirby's.*

Neal: You have to think of Kirby's impact in a general sense. Kirby's a phenomenon as well as an inspiration. But nobody says they want to draw as well as Kirby. His work is like this kind of wall. It will never get better, it will never get worse, it's just there. It exhausts itself.

My work is more like a promise. My work says, "Here's this road. Here are some of the things you can see along the road, and there's no end to it." My impact, I think, is on a very personal, individual level. If you do good work and you succeed, the things that people take away from it are as individual as they are. The depth of the work was sufficient to reach different sparks in each person.

In a sense, my work said you now have permission to aspire to do great art in comic books. That if you think you're only worthy of producing fine art or becoming great in another field, I only present comic books as potential....

The challenge is, this is what I've done; what can you do?

Barks & Taliaferro

the dream-team of the

Donald Duck Dailies!

Taliaferro's Donald Duck strip from September 11, 1939.

DONALD DUCK
The "Fruit" of Guessing.
By Walt Disney
GUESS HOW MANY BEANS IN THIS BOWL
$100 PRIZE
CONTEST CLOSES TODAY
THE CORRECT GUESS IS ___ BEANS
13,447— WHAT A CINCH! 3,448, 3,449— OH BOY! OH-BOY!
GUESS IS ___ BEANS
HERE'S MY GUESS PAL— 13,455 BEANS, NO MORE NO LESS!
?
THE CORRECT GUESS IS 1,000 BEANS AND 1 GRAPEFRUIT
WALT DISNEY

Re-discovering the all-star hall-of-fame hits by the Sultans of Squawk!

By Michael Naiman

Carl Barks' fans know that his first comic book work was writing "Pluto Saves the Ship" with Jack Hannah and Nick George, which appeared in *Large Feature* #7 in 1942. His first comic book art work was for "Donald Duck Finds Pirate Gold" published as *Four Color* #9 in August 1943. However, recent information has surfaced that indicates Carl Barks contributed gags to Al Taliaferro's daily Donald Duck strip as early as 1939… a full three years before Pluto Saves the Ship! How did Carl develop his gag writing skills? Were these talents ever used in other media forms? A quick look at Barks' early career will help answer these questions!

After having sold one-panel gag cartoons to the Calgary Eye Opener (a mildly naughty humor magazine) as a free-lancer in 1928 and 1929, Barks was eventually hired as an in-house gag man and illustrator in 1931, and worked at the Eye Opener's offices in Minneapolis until 1935. When the Depression affected the financial viability of the Eye Opener, Carl sent some of his sample drawings to the Disney studio where he was promptly hired as an "inbetweener" on their animation staff. Realizing Carl's talent as a gag-man, he was soon promoted to the Story Department where he worked on 36 Disney cartoons from 1937-1944. (see sidebar)

While working on ideas for the animated cartoons in the "Duck Unit," Carl realized that some of his gags might be more appropriate for the Donald Duck newspaper strip that was being drawn by Al Taliaferro and written by Bob Karp. (Taliaferro remained on the strip until 1969; Karp until July of 1974)

According to Carl, "I did about a dozen of these gags for Donald in 1939 and a couple in 1940. It was easy… they'd pay us $10 per gag when they were used… it was good extra money in those days. Whenever we'd submit a piece we'd call it "going upstairs" because that's where the work was being done… upstairs from the animation department.

Following this successful sojourn in the print media, one might conclude that the ideas for some of Barks' later one-page Donald, Gyro, and Uncle Scrooge gags (numbering more than 160) might have been conceived while Barks was submitting gags to Taliaferro for the early Donald strips.

Whether it's dreaming up situational gags for cartoons, creating classic oil paintings, or writing and drawing some of the greatest comics of all time, Carl Barks' multi-faceted talent never ceases to amaze his worldwide audience. But the point that serious historians should note is that this new addendum to the Barks' history significantly alters the starting point of his Disney Duck print media career! Carl Barks and Al Taliaferro collectors take note! ■

Walt Disney's
DONALD DUCK
WIN A PRIZE! GESS HOW MANY BEANZ IN JAR! 10¢ A GESS!
I KNOW HOW TO WIN THAT PRIZE.
SIX INCHES HIGH! THREE INCHES WIDE.
1964 BEANS - 1570 BEANS 1571 BEANS
SAME SIZE JAR!
SELL ME A CHANCE BOYS. HERE'S MY GUESS - 1964 BEANS.
THE GREAT MOMENT ARRIVES!
THE WINNING GUESS IS 815 BEANS
THAT'S A LIE! THERE ARE MORE BEANS THAN THAT.
THE CORRECT NUMBER IS 807 BEANS - AND ONE ROCK!
THUD
CROOKS! SWINDLERS! I'LL TEACH YOU TO BAMBOOZLE AN HONEST MAN!
© 1996 WALT DISNEY

Special thanks to the Carl Barks Studio, Bill Blackbeard, David Gerstein, the Disney Digest Index, and duck fans from all corners of the globe.

Barks' expansion of his original gag now entitled "Beans" that appeared as a one-pager in Four Color #189 "The Old Castle's Secret" (Jun 1948).

CARL'S CARTOON CATALOG! (by film release date)

Modern Inventions (May 29, 1937)
Donald's Ostrich (Dec 10, 1937)
Self Control (Feb 11, 1938)
Donald's Better Self (Mar 11, 1938)
Donald's Nephews (Apr 15, 1938)
Good Scouts (Jul 8, 1938)
Donald's Golf Game (Nov 4, 1938)
Donald's Lucky Day (Jan 13, 1939)
The Hockey Champ (Apr 28, 1939)
Donald's Cousin Gus (May 19, 1939)
Sea Scouts (Jun 30, 1939)
Donald's Penguin (Aug 11, 1939)
Autograph Hound (Sep 1, 1939)
Mr. Duck Steps Out (Jun 7, 1940)
Bone Trouble (Jun 28, 1940)
Put-Put Troubles (July 19, 1940)
Donald's Vacation (Aug 9, 1940)
Window Cleaners (Sep 20, 1940)
Fire Chief (Dec 13, 1940)
Timber (Jan 10, 1941)
The Golden Eggs (Mar 7, 1941)
Early to Bed (Jul 11, 1941)
Truant Officer Donald (Aug 1, 1941)
Old MacDonald Duck (Sep 2, 1941)
Chef Donald (Dec 5, 1941)
The Village Smithy (Jan 16, 1942)
Donald's Snow Fight (Apr 10, 1942)
Donald Gets Drafted (May 1, 1942)
The Army Mascot (May 22, 1942)
Vanishing Private (Sep 25, 1942)
Sky Trooper (Nov 6, 1942)
Bellboy Donald (Dec 18, 1942)
Old Army Game (Nov 5, 1943)
Home Defense (Nov 26, 1943)
Trombone Trouble (Feb 18, 1944)
The Plastics Inventor (Sep 1, 1944)

Cartoon information is from "Carl Barks and the Art of the Comic Book" page 216 by Michael Barrier 1981 M. Lilien New York, New York

NEAL ADAMS

VISIONARY AND PIONEER!

1,693 PAGES THAT MADE COMIC BOOK HISTORY!

I became enamored with Neal Adams when I was 13 years old. That was when I first read "The Senator has Been Shot" in the August/September 1969 issues of The Brave And The Bold #85. The issue featured the team-up of Batman and Green Arrow, and marked the debut of a "New Look" for Green Arrow. The "New Look" was designed by the artist of the issue – Neal Adams. I remember looking at the dynamic cover of *B&B* #85 and thinking that Green Arrow's new costume design was the coolest super-hero costume I'd seen in comics. After reading the story, I felt that the artwork in the in the entire issue was incredibly exciting. Call me impressionable, but after reading that issue of *Brave & Bold*, whenever I found a comic that was drawn by Neal Adams in the spinner rack, I bought it! The realistic drawing style of Neal Adams had a charismatic affect that impressed me in the summer of 1969, and continues to impress me to this day.

Neal Adams' work from his magnificent DC era is noted for its near photo-realistic penciling. This realistic style served to convey a wide variety of strong emotions in comics drawn by Adams. Emotions such as joy, grief, love, anger, courage, etc., were communicated through Adams' portrayal of meticulous details, expressive hand and body language, and precise facial expressions. The impact of the penciling was strengthened by Adams' underrated storytelling skills.

His storytelling engaged the reader's attention by using imaginative point-of-view angles in his panel set-ups, and by varying the "camera" distances from panel to panel. Sophisticated layout, panel designs, staging, and pacing all challenged the reader to pay attention to the details in the art and to interact with the reading experience.

When I re-read a great Neal Adams' comic book, I'm overwhelmed by a wave of nostalgia. I remember the thrill of reading the stories for the first time, and, on nearly every page, I recall panels embedded in my memory. The artistry that Adams displayed while working the DC Comics from 1968 through 1974 continues to be renown today. Neal Adams is truly a master of comic book art.

As my interest grew, I learned that Neal Adams was born on June 6, 1941. In high school he attended the School of Industrial Arts, and graduated in 1959. Anxious to start a career, Adams sought work in the comic book industry. His first stop was at National Periodicals. Adams was left waiting in the lobby area while someone in the back offices of National reviewed and rejected Adams' portfolio. After being turned down by National, Adams managed to get free-lance work from Archie Comics. The majority of Adams' Archie jobs were half page fillers for Archie and Archie And Co. In 1959, Adams also spent three months assisting ex-comic book illustrator Howard Nostrand on the syndicated Bat Masterson comic strip.

Adams' first career break came in 1960 when he was hired by the advertising agency Johnson and Cushing. Johnson and Cushing specialized in using comic book storytelling for their advertising work, and the drawing 60's was that of a realistic representative look. Adams saw this job as his opportunity to learn a to excel. He remained with Johnson and Cushing for a little more than two years, becoming one of the top artists at the agency. Adams left the agency with a keenly developed realistic drawing style and the confidence of a seasoned professional.

At age 21, Adams applied for and received the assignment to be the artist on the proposed *Ben Casey* syndicated comic strip. Based on the popular television series, *Ben Casey* was syndicated in 365 newspapers. Adams drew the entire series run beginning with the first strip dated November 26, 1962, continuing until the strips' cancellation on July 31, 1966.

Following the accomplishment of *Ben Casey*, in 1967, Neal Adams shifted his career focus back to comic books. His first comic book work came from writer-editor Archie Goodwin at Warren. The 26 year-old Adams was then offered free-lance assignments at National Periodicals. He was the first "new" artist hired at National during the 60's—most of the artists working at National had been there since the mid-50's or earlier. Artists like Swan, Mooney, Infantino, Kane, Heath, Kubert, Anderson, Moldoff, and Sprang had been at National for years working under the editorial hierarchy. His initial assignments at National were short stories in *Our Army At War* and in *Star-Spangled War Stories*, and several issues each of *The Adventures Of Bob Hope* and *The Adventures Of Jerry Lewis*.

After a few months of working at National, Adams succeeded Carmine Infantino on *Strange Adventures*, #206, November 167. The comic featured the unconventional superhero, Deadman. *Strange Adventures* #206–216 provided Neal Adams the opportunity to make use of the skills he studied and refined while working in the commercial advertising and syndicated strip fields. Adams approached the Deadman assignment with a confident storytelling style and a desire to experiment with page design. Unlike the conservative static page layout prevalent in most other DC comics, Adams' Deadman panels and pages were drawn and arranged in different shapes and sizes. The storytelling was paced by varying the "camera's" distance, by showing imaginative point of views, and by using panel breakdowns to control time. Adams' storytelling created what felt like a new and exciting reading experience for readers and fans of the 1960's.

The Deadman comic stories showcased the acclaimed realistic drawing style that everyone now identifies as the "Neal Adams" style. The characters in the Deadman series communicated wide ranging emotions through Neal Adams' portrayal of dynamic body language and precise facial expressions. Adams' detailed, realistic pencils and his innovative approach to storytelling added resonance to the tragic storyline of the Deadman series. This series earned Adams accolades from comic book fans and professionals.

I'VE BEEN STRUNG OUT WITH MY ROMANCE ... HAVEN'T HAD TIME FOR MUCH ELSE.
I'M ASKING YOU FOR AN ASSIST! WITH A PUNCTURED LUNG, I'D BE CLOSE TO ZILCH IN A BRAWL.

Green Arrow in "Snowbirds Don't Fly" from GL #85. Facing pg: Batman is about to KO Ra's Al Ghul at the climax of Adams' great epic.

Soon after the work on the Deadman series began, Adams was enlisted by the DC cover editor, Carmine Infantino, to become DC's main cover artist. From 1968 through 1973 Adams displayed his versatility and productivity by penciling 379 covers for the wide variety of comedy, science fiction, mystery, horror, western, and super-hero titles that DC published. During that time Neal Adams averaged more than five covers a month for DC.

In his first five years as a comic book illustrator, Adams was prolific. He was held with high regard by editors and publishers, and was the first artist of the modern era with the clout to openly move back and forth between the top two comic book publishers; DC and Marvel. In 1968, Neal Adams' first full year in the comic book industry, he penciled 320 interior pages for DC. In 1969, he penciled 299 pages for DC and 157 pages for Marvel. In 1970, 259 pages for DC and 97 pages for Marvel. In 1971, Neal drew 265 pages for DC and 97 for Marvel. In 1972, Adams slowed down to a mere 175 pages for DC and 24 pages for Marvel. In 1973, 51 pages for DC and 24 pages for Marvel. In 1974, 20 pages for DC and 20 pages for Marvel. In addition to this tremendous volume of output at DC and Marvel, Adams also managed occasional free-lance jobs for Warren and National Lampoon. During the peak of his comic book productivity, the five year period from 1968 through 1972, Adams penciled 1,693 comic book pages at DC and Marvel—a five year average of 28 pages a month!

It was during the five years from 1968 through 1972 when Neal Adams created a body of work that established him as a great comic book artist. That was when Adams produced his landmark works on Deadman, Batman, and Green Lantern/Green Arrow for DC, and The X-Men and The Avengers for Marvel. Highly regarded by his peers, the

BY RICHARD MARTINES

Academy of Comic Book Arts, a membership comprised of comic professionals, voted Adams the Best Penciler of 1970. That same year he and writer Denny O'Neil shared the Academy's Best Continuing Feature award for their work on *Green Lantern*, and *Green Lantern* #76, "No Evil Shall Escape My Sight" won as the Best Individual Story. Adams was recognized again in 1971 by the A.C.B.A. as the Best Penciler, and he and Denny O'Neil shared the award for Best Individual Story for the landmark anti-drug story "Snowbirds Don't Fly", from *Green Lantern* #85. On the back cover to DC's 1992 *Hard Traveling Heroes: The Green Lantern/Green Arrow Collection* Volume 1, Archie Goodwin wrote this about the famed series, "It brilliantly and entertainingly raised your expectations and expanded your notions of what could be accomplished with mainstream, commercial comics. O'Neil's writing and Adams' drawing set standards in characterization and drama that are still being applied and embellished upon. With the aid of veteran editor Julius Schwartz and the participation of some of the best inking talent available, they took comic book archetypes and gave them a degree of humanity never before achieve. The roots of much that is exciting and appealing in today's comic began here."

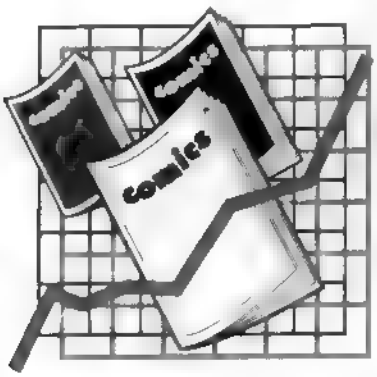
Dick Giordano was Adams' primary inker at DC, and in 1970 and 1971 Giordano won the A.C.B.A. award of Best Inker. The consummate veteran, Giordano's clean and controlled inks were perfectly suited for Neal Adams' pencils. In a September 1980 interview with Gary Groth, published in *The Comic Journal* #62, March 1981, Giordano had this to say about his approach to inking Adams, "I started working with Neal, and I had to develop new disciplines because Neal's stuff is so exact. His penciling is meant to intimidate inkers, so that they won't deviate too far from what he's done, and I had to find a way to accommodate my needs and his at the same time. I had to get a feeling of crispness and a feeling that I contributed something without losing any of the detail and things that he considered important. It was a struggle, but I thought I was successful."

The Adams Batman transformed the Dark Knight for all time... as these two panels illustrate.

In 1971, Adams entered into a business partnership with Dick Giordano, and formed Continuity Associates--a commercial arts advertising studio specializing in comic style advertising. Continuity was created, in part, because Giordano and Adams questioned the survival of the shrinking comic book marketplace. Within two years, the financial success and increased obligations at Continuity led to a sharp decrease in Adams' comic book output. Adams' comic book page count at DC went from 265 interior pages in 1971 down to 51 interior pages in 1973. In 1974, Adams penciled one 20 page Batman story before boycotting DC over DC's policy of not returning original artwork. By then, the financial responsibilities and rewards at Continuity had become Neal Adams' career focus, and comic books had become a secondary luxury.

In 1978 Adams' returned to DC for one last collaboration with long time partners, Denny O'Neil and Dick Giordano, co-plotting and penciling the *Superman vs. Mohammed Ali* tabloid. This tabloid was the last comic book story that Adams did for either DC or Marvel. Despite several announced projects since then, the Super Vs Mohammed Ali tabloid stands as the last comic book story that Adams produced for either DC or Marvel. While certainly not the end of Adams' career in comics, the tabloid has come to represent the end of a remarkable period in Neal Adams' comic book career.

In the 1970s Adams served as the president of the Academy Of Comic Book Arts, and later, the comic book Artists Guild. Through those organizations, and through his own actions, Adams lobbied for the return of original art, for reprint rates for artists, for royalties, for medical insurance packages, and against work for hire rules. Adams successfully aided Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster in their plight with DC, helping Siegel and Shuster receive annual compensation and recognition for their creation of Superman. These creator rights ideas were all abstract concepts became standards that Adams helped see to fruition. In a speech given at the Diamond Comic Distributor Retailers Seminar on June 12, 1994 Frank Miller had this to say about Adams, "I can testify, as a firsthand witness: if there's ever an accurate history of comic written, Neal Adams will be recognized not just as a brilliant and influential artist, but as a visionary, as a pioneer. As one of the heroes of the field. And if our future is as bright as I believe it can be, Neal Adams will be appreciated as the man who helped us turn a crucial corner toward that future." ■



RICHIE EVANS • BEDROCK CITY COMICS
Houston, Texas

Hello from Houston. It has been an interesting summer and is shaping up to be an even more eventful fall. All the goings-on in the new issue marketplace have affected our back issue sales as some fans are choosing older comics over the new. While the reasons are obvious (cover prices, character changes, shipping schedules, etc.) I look forward to a time when both are strong.

The best selling pre-1965 comics for us are those priced between $50 and $500. Collectors are a little more choosy on comics over $1,000 unless they are priced fairly or are really special. We have traded a ton of books lately as a means to change over stock or help out customers who desire bigger ticket items.

This leads to a plug for the Houston Area Comic Collectors Club, a group that meets quarterly here in town to swap, show-off, brag, geek-out (thanks Phil Barnhart), and have an all-around fun time with Golden and Silver Age comics. Please call for dates and times if anyone is at all interested. Now on to the facts.

Golden Age Sales:

Exciting #34 vf/nm $300, Smash #58 vg $30, Batman #11 vg/fn $1500; #21 vg $200, #24 vg $200, #41 vg $165, Detective #94 vg/fn $185, World's Finest #3 vg $500; Police #15 nm $600; Classics Illustrated #44 fr $35.

1950's Sales:

Mad #7 vg/fn $100, #24 vf $350, Piracy #2 vg $25, Weird Fantasy #15(#3) gd $50, Tales of Suspense #5 vg $50, Terrifying Tales #11 vf/nm $175;

(continued on page 70)

THE MATT SCHIFFMAN REPORT

DC Sci-Fi is headed for the Stars!

Back in '94 we heard many of the same sentiments that we've been hearing lately. The explanation this time is simple... Silver at multiples of guide slowed down and a few dealers could no longer sell their GD issues for full guide. This brought cries of disaster.

Quietly, high-grade Silver Age is selling for great prices. Everyone just isn't going to get multiples for mid-grade Silver Age and Golden Age... at least for now.

We all must remember the Guide has also gone up drastically. There are still plenty of sellers out there that are selling books for great prices. So some can't sell all their books for 3X guide, are we conclude that the is market now in recession? Not from many sellers I'm able to talk to.

Platinum Age (Pre 1933)

Want lists are made, but are they filled. The consensus is that many of these books are not viewed so much as "Comic Books" as they are being viewed as antiques by the mainstream market. Therein is the problem... many of these books are more readily found at your local antique mall than in any comic shop. Hopefully the message will get out.

Sales: Oh-Skin-Nay! VG $80; Dancin' Fools (not in guide) FN $195; Life's A Joke GD $55; Little Orphan Annie #5 FN $140.

PreGA and Golden Age (1933-45)

Some had a great showing at San Diego, while others didn't. Did prices have something to do with it? You bet... it always does. Quite a bit of action occurred within the $1,400 and below range of books. Last year, Mile Highs below a thousand were the hit of the convention. This year it was those esoteric early Golden Age books that brought the attention to the market. But as always, the lack of availability was the hindrance in reporting any type of overall trend. Centaurs, Fox, Quality, Fiction House, and Funnies; Novelty was in demand and continues to be throughout the summer. It is really that tough to find these early key issues? Yes!

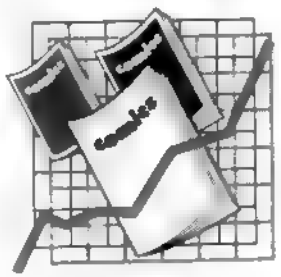
Sales: Black Terror #1 FN $940; Dynamic Comics #1 FN $600; Flash #2 VG $1,100; Flame #1 A VF $1,350; Marvel Mystery #92 NM $1,900; Target V1#4 FN+ $400; Captain America #2 VG- $1,900; Adventure #66 FN $650; Batman #65 VF $450; Plastic Man #2 VG/FN $325; Jackpot #1 FN/VF $1,395, Hit #11 FN $410; Crown #8 NM $275, Real Fact #1 FN+ $280; Green Mask #1 VG $585; USA #1 GD $985; Whiz #3 A FN $650; Wonder Woman #20 FN $310.

Post GA & Pre SA (1946-56)

The difficulty in finding these books, let alone finding them in grade is becoming much more difficult than most imagined it would be. Early DC Science Fiction titles are receiving intensive renewed interest, along with the romance titles. Many collectors erroneously assumed that because there is a smaller collecting population, the genre was so popular, and that the estimated print runs were larger, romance titles would be in plentiful supply. Not so! For years the vast majority of these books were viewed with disdain by many hobbyists and were banished to the bargain bins and library reading boxes. But a new renaissance of interest has sparked a whole new group of collectors to seek out and purchase these classic and rare titles, especially DC, Atlas/Marvel, and ACG. Surprisingly, most issues from the 1950s and '60s are still dirt cheap.

Sales: Weird Adventures #2 VG $70; Strange Tales #18 NM $580; Forbidden Worlds #1 FN++ $450; Pictorial Romances #5 GD $38; Nightmare #12 FN+ $110; Hollywood Secrets #1 VF- $165; Cupid #2 FN $95; Startling Comics #48 VF+ $520; Captain Science #1 FN $235; Fantastic Worlds #6 FN $80; Canteen Kate #1 VF/NM $475; Sungirl #1 FN $460; Phantom Lady #23 FN $1,700;

(continued on page 72)



(Continued from page 69) Sensation #107 fn/vf $325, Four Color #199 vf $200

Silver Age Sales:

Amazing Spider-Man #20 vg/fn $70, Tales Of Suspense #40 vg $175, Tales To Astonish #27 fn $800, X-Men #8 fn/vf $140, #36 nm $60. We also sold a handful of original owner DC silver age, among them: Action 252 vf/nm $900, Brave & Bold #25 vf/nm $225, Mystery In Space #53 fn/vf $800, #54 vf/nm $350, #55 vf/nm $200, #57 fn/vf $125, Showcase #15 fn $650, and #22 vf/nm $9,000 in trade.

GREG WHITE • COMIC BOOKS & COLLECT.

Kissimmee, Florida

Hello and welcome to wet and humid Central Florida. As the summer winds down we have enjoyed an increase in tourists sales and hope it will continue into the autumn. Our local sales base has remained steady although trying to determine which new product will sell is still a crap-shoot. Mail order and convention sales have run hot and cold. I remain very concerned that too much of the pre-1965 product is priced out of reach for most collectors and continues to be harmful to our hobby. Many of the prices in the Overstreet guide are not attainable from the vast majority of collectors and, I feel, should be lowered accordingly.

Silver Age Comics (1956-1969)

We have had good fortune recently with sales of 1960's Marvels. Even some of the lower grade issues have been moving (as long as the price is somewhat below Overstreet). DC and Gold Key have also been steady. A puzzlement to me is why Charlton comics from this period do not sell well. We have a fine selection of high grade sci-fi and superhero Charltons (including many Ditko books) that just don't move. For the most part these comics are affordable. Hopefully their day will come. We bought collections recently that included strong runs of Flash, JLA, X-Men, Avengers, FF, Batman, and Detective. These books will help supplement our autumn and winter stock.

Recent sales: Hulk #2 VF $500, Strange Tales #101 FN $175, Tales of Suspense #41 VG $95, Batman #155 FN $150, set of Dell Zorro comics FN-VF $300.

Golden Age Comics (1935-1955)

Not as much activity this month. We picked up a run of 1940's Superman comics and a small group of Timelys. Demand continues for the books that don't come in very often. I have had many requests for More Fun Comics and Adventure Comics as of late.

Recent sales: Batman #3 GD $700, Batman #6 VG $800, Submariner #3 GD $400.

Original Artwork

Quite a bit of activity lately. We sold a variety of pieces and purchased a landmark piece of 1930's Disney art. Anyone who collects the Disney hardcover books of the late 30's and 40's would recognize this great Mickey and Donald graphic. A local doctor who maintains one of the best vintage Disney collections I have ever seen has already agreed to go the freight on this item. Other sales include a Frazetta page, a 1950's Dennis The Menace puzzle original, and a Peanuts Sunday. It may be a while before we have such an active artwork month again!

That's a wrap for this month. Enjoy the cooler autumn weather and please stop by whenever you visit the Magic Kingdom.

TIM COLLINS • RTS UNLIMITED, INC.

Golden, Colorado

Where does the industry sit? I just had a long conversation with David Vinson of DC Comics to try and get a handle on our fair hobby. He was happy to report, from a new comics perspective, that things are picking up. What a relief! He also said that the larger stores are gaining momentum over the smaller stores. With the consolidation of distributors and current discount plateaus, that isn't surprising. I expect more single stores to go out of business and for the chains to pick up the slack. I believe the single stores that do survive will do so because of three reasons: 1) superior customer service, 2) product diversification and 3) large back issue stock. In our area, these three elements are paramount in order for us to compete with the local big chain.

Back issues are strong overall. Higher ticket items appear a little weak (election year jitters?). May the champions of a capital gains tax prevail!! Sales of Westerns continue to surprise me. All periods are selling extremely well. The value is definitely there. There are a group of excellent artists who tackled Westerns such as Alex Toth and Russ Heath. Most Westerns from the 1950's are $10-50 so they are really inexpensive in comparison to comparable super-hero titles which might sell for five times as much. War books continue to sell well also.

A large one-owner collection (some 6,000+) books recently surfaced in Colorado. It contained high-grade early to mid fifties horror, sci-fi, western and misc. titles. Sales have been quite brisk!

Tim's tip of the month: I have recently had to re-bag some comics and noticed scuffing between the back cover and acid-free boards. I think that with the large amount of handling my inventory receives, the scuffing may be exacerbated over the typical collection. However, I highly recommend using thinner Mylar bags without backing boards and then putting the comic inside another bag with backing boards. This problem seems to be worse with newer higher gloss books. Collect for enjoyment!

GREG PHARIS & DAVE GRISEZ

SAN DIEGO COMICS & COLLECTIBLES

San Diego, California

As the summer draws to a close we can look back on a few pieces of information and draw a few honest conclusions. Speculators leaving the new comic market have created a void that most retailers have not managed to fill. More vintage comics have crept out of collections to find their way to market. Market prices have not decreased on these books (shock!). They have in most cases boomed! Why? Doesn't this defy logic? Actually No. True readers and collectors are *(continued on page 73)*

Playboy #1 FN $2,200; MAD #1 VG- $1,200; Dagar #15 VF $375, Piracy #1 FN $95

Silver Age (1956-69)

Books that have been sitting for some time seem to have started moving lately. Sellers are reporting a renewed interest in Silver Age, especially high grade and Silver that presents a bargain. I don't think anyone really disputed that there is quite a bit of Silver out there, but then again, there are quite a few Silver collectors, and the population is still growing. DC Science Fiction titles (especially 10¢ cover price Strange Adv. and Mystery in Space), X-Men, and any low number early DC issues are leading the way. Also of note is the increasing demand for key issues from minor publishers. Funny animal, teenage humor (especially Archies in grade), and other "cartoon-style" books are in increasing demand as well since hobbyists have discovered just how difficult it is to locate these books. Also, the DC War books are still on an upward march and bringing in platoons of new collectors with each passing month. This is helped by the relatively low prices of most issues, as well as more and exposure through published articles. Our Army At War #81, 82, and 83 continue to be in high demand all over the country.

Sales. Brave & Bold #5 VF+ $500; Our Army At War #82 FN/VF $385, Amazing Spider-Man #14 NM $1,800; Hulk #3 FN $375; Amazing Fantasy #15 VG $3,800; Justice League Of America #1 GD $125; Flash #105 VF $2,500 House Of Mystery #50 VF/NM $195; Star Spangled War Stories #90 NM $465; Kid Colt #79 NM $68, Mission Impossible #1 Mint $170; Wonder Woman #124 VF/NM $75, X-Men #1 FN+ $1,200; X-Men #1 GD $470; Tales Of Suspense #52 VF/NM $150; Strange Adventures 205 FN++ $38.

Bronze Age or Post Silver Age (1970-79)

With the renewed interest in the pre-hero Marvel and DC books, it only follows that the early 70s reprints would also create a following. When most of these books guiding for such low prices, readers and collectors are picking these tough-to-find-in-grade issues. As 70s aficionado discover which books are more plentiful than others, sales on one or two Marvel titles slack off at the above guide prices, while others are bringing higher and higher multiples each month.

Sales: Adventure #428 NM $17; Our Army At War #300 NM $10; Marvel Premiere #1 NM $38; Sgt. Rock #302 NM $32, Our Fighting Forces #123 NM $30; Combat Kelly #1 NM $15; Marvel Team-Up $85; Amazing Spider-Man #121 NM $125, #122 NM $140; Hulk #181 NM $450; Iron Man #54 NM $38; Daredevil #81 NM $18; Batman #232 NM $80; Detective #400 NM $65; Action #334 NM $40; Adventure #381 NM $35; Brave & Bold #75 $40; Underdog #1 (GK) $70; Korak #46 NM $12, Marvel Premiere #3 NM $38; Justice League Of America #74 NM $18; Young Love #199 NM $24; Showcase #80 NM $65, Pink Panther #1 NM $40.

Navigating the Marketplace

For those that are finding this market difficult to navigate in, and find that prices are just not as high as before, just break out your guide from last year and compare it to this year's guide. Of course when a book had been bringing close to double guide in 1995, and then climbs 40% in the '96 guide, it seems obvious that still attempting to get double guide may be asking a bit much. Players in the comic book marketplace have become much more educated than they were just two years ago, and most know exactly which books should bring higher prices than guide... and which don't. Those who sell wish ALL books brought more than guide; Discriminating buyers are becoming more and more choosy when it comes to paying over guide. Such is the natural tendencies of the market.

But the bottom line is that certain comics are still one of the best and safest investments around... IF you do your homework before you buy! ■

always looking for gems to add to their collections. Fact is, the speculators that left the hobby had no real love for comics, only a quick buck. And a lot of us were lulled by this bullish market. Hence, as the "Hope for an easy dollar artists" left comics to their greener pastures (it looks as if they have all jumped into the new action figure market) we're left with the true readers and collectors who are still in love with this hobby and recognize good comics, great comics and harder than heck to get comics! Let us jump off our soapbox for a minute to give everyone some recent Sales to Ponder.

Batman #256 VF $15, #250 VF $12, #246 VF $12, #178 NM- $25, #144 VG $30, #159 FN $24, #159 VG+ $40; Amazing Spider-Man #121 VF+ $100, 122 VF+ $125.

Dealing with toys is always an adventure and still pretty unpredictable. However, amongst them all "original" Star Wars figures and vehicles are stable (and stellar) sellers. Micro Machine Sleve I (loose) $45, Yoda Hand Puppet (loose) $22.

Disney items remain solid and we buy and sell them regularly. Enesco Winnie the Pooh (early '70 s) $18 (small chip out of ear) Ceramic Snow White Night-lite $65, Donald Duck Big Little Books (3 different titles) Good $15 each.

There has been a recent surge of interest in Hot Wheels (Red lines and die cast cars in general, Corgi & Matchbox). The average Hot Wheel car loose and in good condition will sell between $10-15 each and we've recorded many sales at that level. Other toy sales include: Firestorm (Super Powers) carded $30, Sports noddler (Dodgers) from 1967 $65, Boxed Spiderman Halloween costume from 1977 $90, Six Million Dollar Man View Master set of three reels $18.

Well, the big shows are over and the kids are back in school. If you're in the neighborhood drop on by, hang out and say hello .. 'til next time! ■

Collectors should note that the opinions expressed in CBM Market Reports are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Comic book values and prices listed here are subject to the above conditions. Seasoned hobbyists are acutely aware that comic book and collectible prices and values vary based on geographic location, time of year, and a number of other marketplace factors.

MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 6

Bill Black Writes

Re: Nolan's Notebook #37 - "neither Jet Powers nor the Space Ace that appeared in ME's Jet originated in Manhunt" The Manhunt Space Ace was "Jet Black", another character.

The fifth issue of Jet (1951) was not the Space Ace #5 one-shot… that came out in 1953! The numbering on Jet was continued with The American Air Forces picking up with #5 and running through #12 (1951-54). This Korean war title was also by Powell and featured such war heroes as Mike Battles, Rocky Beach, and… Army air ace "Jet Powers"!

This information is noted in Overstreet's price guide. Maybe you could mention the correction to your readers.

I greatly appreciate that Michelle set the record straight on the Farrell one shot "Rocketman" erroneously noted in Mike Benton's "SF Comics". I almost purchased the Farrell Rocketman on more than one occasion via mail order. Now I'm glad I never did because, thanks to Nolan's Notebook, I know it did not contain the super hero Rocketman.

Bill Black, Florida

Whew!!!! Sometimes I think I know my comics… and then I talk with Michelle or Bill and am reminded of just how much I still have to learn.

In The Spirit Of Nit-picking

In a recent CBM letter column, Michelle Nolan asked if Bill Ward had done any more art for Fawcett Comics than the baseball books he'd mentioned. The answer: you betcha!

Ward was one of the mainstay artists on Captain Marvel, Jr. and Bulletman in Fawcett's post-war period. On Cap, Jr. he draws a lot like Kurt Shaffenberger, so sometimes they're hard to tell apart. A good way to identify him is by checking out the hair on any female characters in the story. If it's drawn somewhat like Torchy's, that's Ward. His Bulletman stories can usually be distinguished by his job on Bulletgirl: if she's got the proverbial "legs that start here and go all the way to there" a la (again) Torchy, it's a Ward story.

In addition to that, Bill Ward did a lot of work on early Fawcett hero comics, probably before he was drafted or enlisted (if he did a hitch). He was an artist on Captain Marvel, Captain Marvel, Jr., Bulletman, Mr. Scarlet, and Spy Smasher, according to Jerry Bails. In addition, Ward had a short humor feature called "Private Ward" which ran in Bulletman #3-7. The title character was a Private Snafu-type soldier who may have been a humorous version of Bill Ward himself.

For my money, Ward was the second-best Blackhawk artist, right behind Reed Crandall. It's a pity most fans today only know him as the Torchy artist. But then, there are worse things to be known for.

Liked CBM #39. Here's a couple of bits. First, in Joe Sinnott's interview, Joe states that "Soon I was inking the FF every month, but I still managed to do the Beatles book for Dell in 1964." No great trick. Outside of his one-shot ink job on FF #5, his regular stint as Jack's FF inker didn't start until FANTASTIC FOUR #44, Nov. 1965.

Second, I doubt that Pildorr the Plunderer from STRANGE TALES was really the prototype for The Thing. Ben Grimm's alter ego was, of course, influenced by all the monsters Stan and Jack had been creating in the fantasy books, but he's no more like Pildorr than he is like Googam, Son of Goom or any other batch of orangish-brown, craggy-looking monsters of that time. At least, that's what I think.

Third, your caption on pg. 47 re: Spirit In Outer Space: "While the rest of us baby boomers were sneaking out of bed to watch the Outer Limits. Will, Feiffer and Woody were creating this flying saucer masterpiece." The Outer Space Spirit ran from July to October of 1952. The Outer Limits didn't appear until 1963. If YOU were sneaking out of bed to watch 'em while the Wally Wood Spirits were coming out.. that's straight out of the Twilight Zone!

Note should also have been taken of Joe Sinnott's fine pencil-ink jobs on Thor in Journey Into Mystery #91, 92, 94-96, and maybe even his one Nick Fury full-art job in

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MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 75

Strange Tales #139, over Kirby layouts.

For the heck of it, I'll also mention that several of the Spirit covers that appeared in the Eisner piece were not by Will. Spirit #9 (Quality) on pg. 47 is by Reed Crandall. Spirit #12 (IW-Super) on pg. 53 was done by Sol Brodsky. And Spirit #11 (IW-Super) on pg. 54 is by Joe Simon.

A reader asked about information on the Best of DC Horror Comics trade paperback. There ain't no such animal! He may be thinking about the EC Classics Horror Library which came out many years ago.

That's all for the nit-picking session this time. yours very truly,

Lou Mougin, Texas

Visceral Experience

Just a brief note of thanks to you and Michael Naiman for your hospitality, and the kind welcome, as I experienced my first San Diego Comic Convention on Saturday. As I'm sure you will appreciate, it was a visceral experience which almost put the senses on overload, to view and scan that ocean of comic material on the floor of the massive exhibit hall.

Similarly, it was a real pleasure to meet all you folks after so many letters and phone calls over the past several years. And imagine my surprise to have an opportunity to have sat down briefly one-on-one with you, just prior to the Saturday night American Association Of Comicbook Collectors dinner for an impromptu chat about the grading issue. If one has to disagree with someone on some of those controversial grading topics, it's nice to do so with a person as engaging and open-minded as yourself. Also, thank-you for having previously printed my letter in the issue of CBM last Fall, although I'm sorry to say that I missed that one and unfortunately didn't get to see it as well as your Editor's response.

Gary, there were nice bargains to be had, even among the high prices characteristic of a number of the booths on the floor. I only spent $385.00 or so on Saturday, but got about $700.00 worth of books for that much. It's certainly a boost to the ego (as well as the id) to have such a successful experience, the first time out there.

Craig Rader, Texas

Who knows Craig, maybe we'll get another chance to discuss combination grades. Just for the record, Michael and Susan Naiman deserve all the credit the AACC Annual Dinner! And speaking of the AACC, I hope every serious bobbyist will join this remarkable organization. You can do so by contacting Michael at (619) 465-2669.

Until Exhaustion

The '96 San Diego Comic-Con was great! It had people, games, seminars, and most of all, it had books. Coming into the hall with money in your pocket or a credit card clear and poised, what a great feeling it is! The International Comic-Con-San Diego had books priced high and low. First score was some DC War... now a pair of Adam Strange Showcases... then Vic Torrey and his Flying Saucer... so on and so on. The hunt, the acquisition. You go until exhaustion or emptied pockets or both.

Then you hit the area of big book presentations. Flashing lights, costumes, free stuff... what excitement. And then you see it... not international, telemarketed, high-tech communicating hoards of people with over-priced books... a little girl holding a sign telling you a comic book artist will give you an autograph. (Sign reads: John Romita signing at Booth 1309 NOW!) This brings an "international" even back to its origin...(for me) a comic convention in San Diego, California.

L. Thomas, Arizona

If you'd care to write to CBM, send your comments and information to:

HERE'S WHAT I THINK!

SCOTT BRADEN

Neal Adams – better days and darker knights

We all know that collectors in their 30s, 40s, and 50s consider Neal Adams the great force that changed comics at the end of the Silver Age. Here's why those of us in our 20s do too!

How relevant is Neal Adams' work to both comic collectors and the comics they purchase today? That's like asking how relevant oxygen is for human survival. Very.

Even I, a 26-year-old fanboy who started getting into the throes of comic-collecting when Frank Miller, John Byrne, and Walt Simonson were all the rage, know (with all my heart) that comics would have been an entirely different beast without Neal Adams. He took the medium by the throat, shook it about, and set it loose… so that it would Literally "jump out" at the reader in all its powerful fury.

Neal Adams redefined… and redesigned our heroes. He took two-dimensional comic book characters and transformed them into super-realistic reflections of ourselves. He created darker knights—more dynamic in expression, more pronounced in movement, and much more determined in purpose. He created the elixir for which Frank Miller transformed the Caped Crusader into the Dark Knight; and thus set Batman into worlds, at the time, unknown. His (along with Dennis O'Neil's) powerful work on Green Lantern/Green Arrow set the tone for all socially relevant stories to come after (i.e. Vertigo). His Avengers justified their tagline "Earth's Greatest Heroes."

With that said, Adam's influence is everywhere. Look at the early work of both Miller and Byrne. Look at Bill Sienkiewicz's gorgeous Moon Knight stories, as well as his current work with Jim Aparo on several Batman titles. Look at Todd McFarlane's Spawn…

Neal Adams (and Jim Steranko, but that's an article for another day) turned comics up a notch. Even a Generation Xer like me knows that when Adams touched brush to canvas, the rules were changed. Like those before—Foster, Raymond, Kirby, and Eisner—Adams set the course for a whole new generation of artists to follow. He gave young artists something to grow from; to expand both their work and their place in the industry we call comics.

Looking at the stands, he still does.

JAMES CASSARA

Merely because of its origin?

I thought I might take a few minutes and reflect on some trends I've seen lately among Golden and Silver Age collectors. Both have had, or potentially might have, a real

impact on the market. Going back a few issues to the series of articles on Pedigree comics… there seems to be a real interest in comics which come from verifiable collections, i.e. Edgar Church or Mile High books. This interest is, and rightfully so, based on the scarcity of finding books in such meticulous condition. There will always be those collectors who have the desire and means to obtain the finest, or one of the finest, copies of a particular issue. These collectors drive the engines that price these books, and that is only fair.

If they are going to be the ones paying the increasingly astronomical prices certain books demand than by all means let them dictate the terms of that market. Few other collectors are able to even enter that arena. I do suspect, however, that many of these books change hands between dealers or a very select group of well heeled collectors.

My concern (if one might even call it that) is the suggestion by some dealers that a book might be priced beyond market value merely because of its origin. Is it realistic that a (for example) Batman #12 in strict VF from a pedigree collection be inherently more valuable than the same book, in the same condition, from another source? I think not, yet increasingly I see the point of origin of a comic being used as a determinant in pricing.

My second point involves the so-called Marvel "Prototype" books, i.e. early "pre-appearances" of Marvel heroes. We all know that Stan and Jack, as well as others, recycled ideas and characters used in the pre-hero Marvel books when creating the Marvel Universe. Ideas and likenesses were culled from the past.

However lately I have noticed dealers making what I consider to be real leaps of judgment when connecting a certain pre-hero character to its later incarnation, and increasing the price of the book accordingly.

Is there some sort of standard for these books? Did either Stan or Jack ever point to certain characters as being the direct descendants of specific Marvel heroes? I would love for someone to address this issue, perhaps even to the point of a checklist which links to pre and post hero issues.

RICHARD M. BROWN

10 "commandments" for shopping at the con!

CBM has received a few letters (since issue #22) from newer hobbyists regarding "Convention protocol." Ye editor invited me to share the few "rules" I usually try to go by (as a many-year veteran of the hobby) when I roam the vast maze of a comic con. Visiting a

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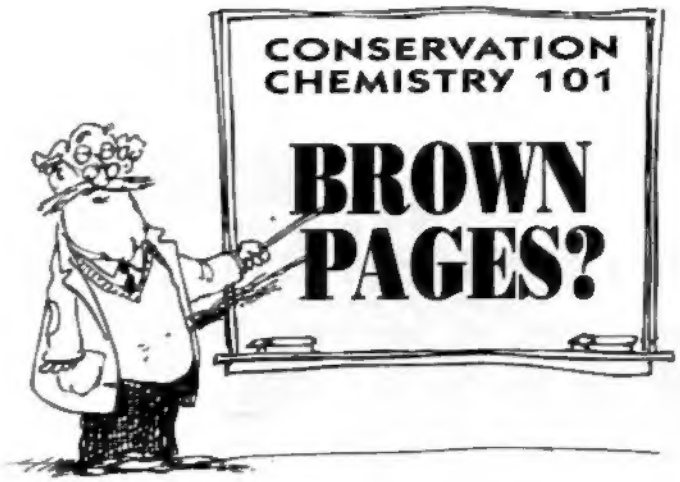
GUEST EDITORIALS

major Comic Con can be exciting - but also a little intimidating. There are different reasons to attend. Some want to meet a comic's professional, some are filling want list holes, some are looking to invest. On that last note, here what I try to do...

1) I work hard to stay focused on what I'm doing! With all the noise, crowds, and "colorful" costumes, it's very easy to get distracted from the primary reason you're there… namely to invest in some great books. **2)** If I want a Showcase #4 (for instance), I ask dealers who have their copies at the show. This can be helpful in two ways. first, if one dealer chats with another (and they do), some of the better ones will help you locate the best copy at the best price. Second, some dealers who know you're shopping with other dealers may be more amenable to negotiating the price of the item. **3)** It's hard for all of us, but I work to avoid wishful thinking about condition! Having experience and knowing the various grading standards helps… plus I'm never afraid to get advice and opinions from fellow collectors. Sometimes they will spot something that both I and the dealer missed. In medicine and in comics… it never hurts to get a second opinion. **4)** I always specifically ask the dealer if the book is restored. I also request a "restoration guarantee" in case we both missed something. Most reputable dealers will be happy to provide this guarantee for say 90 to 120 days. With so much "undiscovered restoration" these days, I feel this is must. **5)** Everyone knows that new books are plentiful and yet there's still a few who get seduced into investing in 100 copies of Superman #75 or 50 copies of Spider-Man in his "extra-special-other-black outfit" or whatever. These books do draw readers to the hobby but I don't think there going to pay for your kid's Harvard education someday. Caveat emptor! **6)** I suggest extreme care be used if you have a comic book autographed. I am personally very concerned about the future that requires proof of autograph authenticity. I also worry about damaging rare books with bad penmanship and running ink. If you want an autograph, I propose getting it on an index card that can be placed inside the book or with it in the Mylar. **7)** I'm uncomfortable making my final deal surrounded by kibitzers, especially if the negotiation is about larger sums. I prefer to make my deal in as private a situation as possible (which can be tough at a con attended by thousands). Sometime I'll wait to buy when most of the con-goers are distracted by special shows or presentations. **8)** I look for the dealers with good interpersonal skills who seem happy to have my business. If they seem unwilling to treat like they are happy to have my business, I shop elsewhere. I feel that a dealer that is unwilling to show even the most basic courtesy, is actually try hard to put me on less-than-equal footing or they just plain don't care. Either way, I shop elsewhere. **9)** Never underestimate the power of the first day and the last day of the con. The first day is critical because one-of-a-kind items usually don't last long. The last day of a convention sometimes has great bargains because dealers may need extra travel or expense money. The first day and the last days are my favorites. **10)** And finally, I always suggest that collectors invest in material you like! A straight investment can be good... but an investment hobby is better!

There you have it… some of my thoughts on investing at the con. Thanks for reading and may *CBM* go on forever. ■



explains why paper becomes fragile, it does not, however, account for why paper turns brown!

Cellulose (a glucose sugar) and hemicellulose (a polysaccharide or multiple sugar unit) are inherently white in color. This is because pure cellulose and hemicellulose are saturated molecules, that is - all of the chemical bonds within their structure are single bonds… and as a result they readily absorb all levels of light. Discoloration occurs when single bonded compounds (saturated) become unsaturated (two or more bonds), and begin to reflect (instead of absorb) light rays.

Understanding Color

Color is a function of the absorption of light rays by an object. Those light rays which are not absorbed (and therefore reflected) determine the color a person sees. If all of the chemical compounds are saturated (that is, composed of single chemical bonds) then all light is absorbed and the chemical compounds in the paper remain essentially colorless – as no light is reflected.

But as soon as the chemicals become unsaturated (that is, the compound has a double or even a triple bond) light is reflected, and in the process its frequency slows down… becoming visible to the human eye as color. The range of colors start at white (a high frequency), dropping in steps to yellows, and eventually tans and browns as the frequency of the light waves continues to decrease. The more unsaturated compounds… the less the frequency of the light reflected… the browner the comic book pages get!

Collectors vs. Chromophores!

As light, a source of energy, comes into contact with paper, chemical reactions (that have already begun) are accelerated and intensified. Cellulose fractures and begins to absorb oxygen at the site of the fractured chemical bonds. This results in new chemical groups being formed… specifically double-bonded groups known as carbonyls (>C=0). These light-reflecting chemical groups are called chromophores and consist of many different types, including the fore-mentioned carbonyl groups. Under conditions of high heat and excessive light, chromophore production is easily achieved in paper as cellulose, hemicellulose, and impurities (such as lignin) all contribute to the formation of chemical groups. Bottom line: They further the discoloration of paper!

Proper Storage?

This is the reason why the recommended temperature and light levels for the long term storage of paper are as follows: 4 68-72 Degrees Fahrenheit; 4 Light levels of 50 lux or less (with no ultraviolet component); 4 50% relative humidity (see next page).

Choke… Gasp… Bleaching?

These recommended levels eliminate a major portion of the energy that can catalyze a chemical reaction and will slow down the formation of chromophores and protect the paper from turning yellow. In addition, a recommended relative humidity level of 50% will help to prevent the further destruction and embrittlement of the paper itself.

Once chromophores have formed in the paper and discoloration has occurred, it is extremely difficult to effectively reverse the processes and "whiten" the paper back to its original color. This can only be done by eliminating the chromophores and/or reverting them back into single bond, saturated compounds. This is most easily and commonly done by chemical bleaching – that is using one chemical to alter, eliminate, or ameliorate the effects of an another.

Bleaching is, however, based mainly on oxidation – the breaking up of double bonds and bonding another chemical to the now single bond sites (such as chlorine). For the short term, the results of bleaching are quite amazing as the colored compounds are changed into a colorless state and/or (hopefully) removed from the structure or the fibres.

But for the long term bleaching is not a good idea. The oxidation of cellulose (especially the introduction of additional chlorides, which in the presence of moisture, will become acidic) can trigger acid hydrolysis and thus weaken the cellulose chain. This eventually causes the paper to become brittle! If the altered chromophore compounds remain in the structure of the paper after treatment, then the saturated compounds can reform their double bonds, once again discoloring the paper (this is known as color revision). The discoloration occurs again, and the paper "ages" from white to yellow to brown.

As any professional conservator will tell you, bleaching should be regarded as a "last step" in treatment, as even the most benign bleaching agent is extremely harmful to cellulose, the primary building block of paper. While the results are often spectacular, they are often only temporary… while the damage done to the cellulose structure of the paper is fairly permanent. For these reasons, the technique of bleaching should rarely be done, and only when specifically requested by the owner of a damaged comic book or other paper collectible.

Thanks for attending this session of Conservation Chemistry 101. Until our next class…. ■

Tracey Hefl has been a member of the American Institute of Conservation and International Institute of Conservation-Canadian Group since 1991. His clients have included the Government of Canada, National Archives, Hudson's Bay Company, and a variety of private collectors worldwide. Send your comments and questions to: CBM's Conservation Chemistry 101, PO Box 180900, Coronado, CA 92118.